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THE EGYPTIAN PROBLEM

BY

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INTRODUCTORY

THIS volume has grown out of a series of articles contributed to *The Times* from Egypt between October, 1919, and April, 1920. I am indebted to the proprietors of *The Times* for permission to reproduce them, but I have amplified and to a large extent rewritten them, as there are many aspects of the Egyptian question to which only the briefest reference could be made within the limits of space allowed to me, however liberally, in a daily newspaper at a time when the world is full of equally urgent questions. As an almost essential preamble to any serious attempt to describe the Egyptian Nationalist movement with which we are confronted to-day, I have reviewed in a few preliminary chapters the story of modern Egypt since that ancient land emerged again little more than a century ago from mediæval obscurity and almost complete oblivion into the limelight of world history.

The present upheaval in Egypt is not merely incidental to the storm of unrest that the Great War has let loose upon other countries besides Egypt, nor is it due solely to the British Occupation or the British Protectorate. It has far deeper causes. The Egyptian question is bound up with a large part of the world's history for the last hundred years. It dates back to the great Napoleonic struggles of which British sea-power determined the final issue; it played, under Mehemet Ali, a big part in accelerating the decay of the Ottoman Empire; it grew

of vital importance to Great Britain when the invention of steam power enabled her to reopen the old maritime trade routes between Europe and the Orient through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and ultimately led to the making of the Suez Canal. British intervention thereupon became inevitable as soon as the misrule and financial profligacy of Mehemet Ali's successors plunged Egypt into ruin and anarchy, and it was the greatness as well as the imperfections of the work which England found herself impelled to undertake during an occupation prolonged far beyond her original expectations that produced in the shape of Egyptian Nationalism the stirrings of that spirit of revolt against European ascendancy which the impact of Western civilisation provokes sooner or later amongst all Oriental peoples. As elsewhere it has set in motion forces, in part progressive and in part reactionary, which in Egypt, under the particular impulse given to them by the war, have found expression in a skilfully organised political campaign against the maintenance of the British Protectorate as well as in an explosive outburst of emotional patriotism, never entirely free, in an Oriental and Mahomedan people, from racial and religious passion.

At a time when self-government is recognised more clearly than ever before to be the keystone of the British Empire and has been set before the peoples of the greatest of our Oriental dependencies as the goal which they also shall reach, it is not unreasonable that Egypt should claim something of the same boon as the corollary of the permanent association with the British Empire into which we sought to force her during the war by the proclamation of a British Protectorate. Were that her whole claim, few if any responsible Englishmen would refuse to go a long way to satisfy it without questioning too closely the actual fitness of the Egyptians to govern themselves. But the Egyptian Nationalists, who have at least temporarily carried the bulk of their articulate fellow-countrymen with them, go much further than that.

They contend that the Egyptians did actually govern themselves before the British occupation, and indeed better than they have been governed under British control, which, except possibly from the point of view of material prosperity, has, they affirm, arrested their national evolution. Nor is that all. They assert that Egypt won for herself under the great Mehemet Ali from the Sultan of Turkey the recognition of an autonomy tantamount to independence, and that the war, in which she contributed handsomely to the victory of the Allied Powers, having finally severed the last of the very shadowy ties that bound her to her Ottoman Suzerain, her former status of autonomy has become automatically and *de jure* one of complete national independence, of which, in accordance moreover with the principle of self-determination, she demands the immediate recognition by all and sundry, and above all by Great Britain.

Whilst I have, I think, shown in the following pages that the British Occupation certainly did not rob Egypt of a freedom and independence which she had never enjoyed, I have sought to describe in no hostile spirit the genesis of Egyptian Nationalism, and to discern the elements of Egyptian nationhood on which it has been built up. I have not shrunk from acknowledging our own share of responsibility for the dangerous deadlock into which we have drifted, and if I have recalled the solid benefits which the people of Egypt have derived from British control, however anomalous the conditions under which it was exercised, I have not attempted to minimise its partial failures and the gradual deterioration of its methods, or to deny the reality of many grievances which it is our duty to redress. We can hardly quarrel with the Egyptians for resenting the way in which the British Protectorate has been thrust upon them, or the clumsy and often heavy hand with which we ruled them during the war. They have a good case for a much larger and more effective share in the conduct of their public affairs, and for a progressive measure of self-government. But

it will be a greater misfortune for them than for us if they spoil it by pursuing the shadow rather than the substance and persisting in demands which bear so little relation to present possibilities that in order to justify them they are driven to appeal to a mythical past bearing equally little relation to the facts of Egyptian history.

It is easy to talk about our withdrawing altogether from Egypt and leaving the Egyptians to govern or misgovern themselves. It is equally easy to talk about our remaining in Egypt and relying solely upon force to impose our will upon the Egyptians. The practical difficulties would in either event prove on closer examination to be almost insuperable. Moreover, to take the former course would mean the craven repudiation of all the responsibilities which we have assumed ever since the Occupation, though we obtained no international sanction for our assumption of them, at the very moment when we have for the first time secured that sanction by enshrining the Protectorate in the Treaty of Versailles. To take the second course would involve a persistent violation of our own principles of freedom which a British democracy would soon decline to tolerate. Either course represents merely a counsel of despair to which British statesmanship is not yet so bankrupt as to allow itself to be driven. The Egyptian problem is in its essence very similar to the problem with which we have already been confronted in India, namely, that of setting the feet of an Oriental people in the path of self-government whilst continuing to safeguard both internal and external peace. We declined for a long time to face it in India. We have at last faced it and made a bold and generous attempt to solve it. We have never yet honestly faced it in Egypt. Within the first year of the Occupation it was—somewhat prematurely—adumbrated in Lord Dufferin's famous Report. We have continued much too long to evade it until evasion has begun to spell disaster. The chaotic conditions which prevail at present

under a Protectorate proclaimed but never defined, and driven to rely mainly on Martial Law for carrying on administration and legislation, are rapidly becoming intolerable to Egyptians and Englishmen alike, as well as to the large foreign communities which, now that the Powers have recognised our status in Egypt, have a better claim than ever to look to us for the maintenance of orderly government.

I ventured, before I left Egypt, to publish as the result of my own observations a few rudimentary suggestions for a solution that should give reasonable satisfaction to Egyptian political aspirations and restore confidence in our good will and good faith without endangering the foundations of national prosperity and individual freedom which, for the first time in her history, at least since the Pharaonic age, Egypt owes to British intervention and British control. My readers, however, will probably be already in possession of the recommendations of the Milner Commission, which naturally has had at its disposal far more abundant materials than can be available to any non-official inquirer. But whatever its recommendations —and I do not profess to be acquainted with them—it will, I feel confident, bear me out in testifying to the urgency as well as to the possibility of finding an issue from a deadlock as damaging to our own reputation as to the well-being of Egypt.

The Oriental mind is hard to read, and even Sir Alfred Lyall, who read it with more understanding than most men, used to say that the older he grew the less inclined he was to dogmatise about it. It is never harder to read than when it has begun, as to-day in Egypt, to seek expression in terms of the West. It was in Egypt that, forty-four years ago, I first felt the fascination of the East. I saw the last years of the Khedive Ismail's evil reign. I was afterwards an eye-witness of Arabi's revolt and of the British Occupation. I have often returned to Egypt since then, and I have known most of the chief actors on the Egyptian stage, and enjoyed

the confidence of many of them. These are my credentials which I must leave the reader to appraise for himself. I have seldom introduced personal reminiscences, as they are generally irrelevant to an impersonal study of a difficult political problem. But it is scarcely a disadvantage to have been able to study the Egyptian problem in the light of knowledge acquired, on the spot and at the time, of the many different phases through which it has passed within the now fairly long span of my own lifetime.

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THE EGYPTIAN PROBLEM

CHAPTER I

MEHEMET ALI: THE CREATOR OF MODERN EGYPT

It is little more than a century since Egypt emerged into modern history from the inglorious obscurity into which she had sunk after Selim the Conqueror incorporated her in 1517 into the dominions of the then mighty Ottoman Empire, and Europe, having discovered new trade routes to the Orient, ceased to take the slightest interest in her fate. Nor did she then emerge from that long obscurity by any effort of her own. She was violently dragged out of it by the vast ambitions of two great soldiers of fortune, neither of them of Asiatic or of African but both of European stock, and both born, by a curious coincidence, in the same year, 1769, in different parts of the Mediterranean—the Corsican Napoleon Bonaparte and the Albanian Mehemet Ali. Napoleon was prompt to realise that in the great duel which had commenced between France and Britain the most vulnerable part of the British Empire was to be sought in the East, and that Egypt provided the best strategic base for threatening the great dependency we were building up in India, and perhaps driving us out of it as we had not so long before ourselves driven out the French. Mehemet Ali, who landed in Egypt during the great upheaval produced by the French invasion and in the very bay of Aboukir in which Nelson's

great victory of the Nile had doomed Napoleon's enterprise to ultimate failure, realised in turn that, in the steady disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt offered a rich and fertile field of incalculable potentialities to his masterful genius.

No European force had landed in Egypt since the Crusaders, when St. Louis of France was defeated and captured at Mansourah in the thirteenth century. But the Egyptian people were not then and never had been an independent nation since the Persians conquered them five hundred years before the Christian era. Greeks and Romans and Byzantines had been their successive masters until the Arabs swept over Egypt in the first tide of Mahomedan conquest. Egypt became subject in turn to the Khalifs of Damascus and of Baghdad, and for a period to the Fatimite rulers of Tunis. In the twelfth century she passed into the hands of the great Saladin, whose dynasty did not long survive him, and from the middle of the thirteenth century down to the beginning of the nineteenth century she submitted to the domination of an alien caste of rulers whose power was only superficially affected by their more or less nominal allegiance to Constantinople after the Turkish conquest. The rule of the Mamelukes in Egypt represents one of the strangest systems of military despotism which the world has ever seen. As their name indicates they were slaves. It was not so much by heredity as by the constant purchase of male children, chiefly Circassians, who were brought up from the moment they arrived in Egypt to become members of the ruling military caste, that Mameluke domination endured for nearly six centuries. The Mamelukes seldom if ever intermarried with the people of the country, whom they regarded and treated as serfs, and though they certainly did not profess celibacy as the great military orders of Christendom did, to whom they have been sometimes compared, their institutions discouraged the family instinct. Seldom did the supreme power pass from father to son beyond

the third generation. It went to the strongest, whether he was recognised as such by common consent, or simply made good his claim at the point of his sharp sword.

During the earlier period of Mameluke rule, before the diversion of European trade with the East to the new ocean routes round the Cape, these slave-kings were able to levy a heavy toll on the transit trade which still passed through Egypt between Venice and the Orient, and though often cruel and bloodthirsty tyrants, they were possessed by the same love of art, especially in the matter of architecture, as the great Italian "despots" and *condottieri* who were their contemporaries. The noblest monuments of Cairo date back to that period and still testify to their opulent and fastidious tastes. The hand of the Ottoman Sultans, though it never uprooted the Mamelukes, exerted upon Egypt the same blighting influence as on every other region over which the shadow of Turkish domination has passed. "Saracenic art in Cairo took wings and departed." The old inspiration and the old sources of wealth dried up. The Turkish Pashas, who represented the Sultan's authority in Cairo, flitted rapidly across the stage, being changed on an average every two or three years, but they preyed all the more ravenously upon the country, whilst the one principle of policy common to all was to set the Mamelukes themselves by the ears. But as the Ottoman Empire waned, the Mamelukes gradually recovered most of the ground they had lost, and in 1771 one of the rare men of mark amongst them, Ali Bey, who, had he lived long enough, might himself have been a Mehemet Ali, sent the Turkish Pasha packing and for a brief moment wrested Syria from the Sultan.

What centuries of Turkish domination had not accomplished Napoleon's meteoric appearance in Egypt did in a few months. It shattered the power of the Mamelukes. The flower of them, some 20,000, perished in battle, mostly at the foot of the Pyramids. Mehemet Ali had merely to deal with the broken remnants after the last of the

French expedition had been escorted out of the country by British troops who had in their turn landed to co-operate with a Turkish force against the French invaders. The British were the first foreigners to befriend the young Albanian, who was serving with the Turks as the captain of a band of his own Albanian followers. He owed his life on one occasion to Sir Sidney Smith, who hauled him, drowning, out of the water into his own gig, and on another occasion his gallantry won special recognition from a British general in a sharp action against the French, in which both British and Turkish forces were engaged. But a few years later the kaleidoscopic changes in European alliances so frequent during the Napoleonic wars had led to a breach between England and Turkey, who had then joined hands with Napoleon against Russia. Mehemet Ali had by that time risen to great power in Egypt. The *ulema* of El Azhar, then as now a stronghold of Mahomedan influence, had themselves proclaimed him to be Pasha of Egypt in the teeth of the Sultan, who merely confirmed him after the event. When another British expedition was sent to Egypt in 1807, this time in opposition to Turkey, he inflicted upon our veteran troops one of the most humiliating defeats we have ever suffered in the East. Some 450 heads of British soldiers were exposed in the Ezbekieh to the derisive gaze of the Cairo populace, and we had to sue for terms to re-embark the remainder of the ill-fated expedition. To the present day the prestige that attaches to Mehemet Ali's name amongst the Egyptian people is due in no small part to those memories.

It was this signal victory over the Infidel that made him master of Egypt. For the Mamelukes had lost what little credit they still possessed by throwing in their lot with ours, and a few years later Mehemet Ali felt himself strong enough to snare some 500 of their chief Beys into the Cairo citadel, where they were ruthlessly slaughtered, whilst thousands of their followers were done to death in the streets of the capital. Egypt was

thrilled with both terror and relief. The military caste which had held the country for so many centuries in its iron grip was no more. The Mamelukes had ruled by the sword, and they perished by the sword. Mehemet Ali spared only the surviving slave-boys who were still under eighteen years of age, and drilled them much as they would have been drilled by their Mameluke masters to be his own devoted henchmen and to form the *élite* of the new armies which were to make his name famous far beyond the borders of Egypt. Yet the Egyptians had only changed masters. Mehemet Ali never regarded them as anything but a people of serfs, *taillable et corvéable à merci,* though he exploited them with far more intelligence and to larger ends.

His first care was to consolidate the authority which he owed to the Sultan's favour by rendering himself indispensable to him. He undertook to crush the Wahabi rebellion. Wahabism is still a great force in Arabia, partly religious and partly political. As a religious movement it had received its first impulse in the early part of the eighteenth century from a puritan reformer, Abdul-Wahab, of the strict Hanbali school of Islam, who denounced the doctrinal laxity of the Turks and their corrupting influence on the life of the Holy Places of Arabia, of which the Ottoman Sultans had constituted themselves the defenders ever since a descendant of the Fatimite Khalifs in Cairo had been induced to transfer to Selim the Conqueror his shadowy title to the Khalifate of Islam. As a political movement it had derived its strength from the support of the Beni Saoud, a powerful Bedouin family of South-eastern Arabia, who placed themselves at the head of a tribal confederacy to drive Turkish influence out of the Arabian peninsula. The Wahabis for a time carried everything before them. They occupied Mecca and Medina, driving out all the Turkish authorities and their clients. In their iconoclastic fervour they laid hands on the sacred shrine of the Kaaba and the Prophet's tomb and despoiled them of

all the costly offerings of generations of Faithful. They forbade prayers for the Sultan as Khalif, they prohibited the use of tobacco and scents and all fine raiment, and compelled the most rigid observance of every rite and ceremony prescribed by ancient tradition. The Sultan appealed to his Egyptian pasha who had driven the British into the sea in 1807 to crush the Wahabi rebellion, which had for nearly half a century defied his thunderbolts. In 1811 Mehemet Ali first sent one of his own sons, Tussoon, who after one disastrous campaign succeeded in reconquering Medina, where it is related that a Scotch renegade who had been made prisoner in 1807 was the first in the breach and the first to enter the sacred tomb. Jedda and Mecca surrendered, and Mehemet Ali was able to send the keys of the Holy Places to Sultan Mahmud as proof of loyal and victorious service. But not till 1818 was the stubborn resistance of the Wahabis broken by Ibrahim, another and more famous son of Mehemet Ali, who captured their last stronghold, Deraya, and rased it to the ground, and sent Abdullah Ibn Saoud to Constantinople to pay the penalty for three generations of rebels. Even then Wahabism did not die out. Its embers went on smouldering throughout the nineteenth century and have threatened more than once recently to burst out again into flame. Another Ibn Saoud marched forth only last year to challenge the claims of the new King of the Hedjaz to the hegemony of Arabia. Fortunately for the latter, whose troops were badly beaten to the east of Mecca, the Wahabi leader had always entertained friendly relations with the British power in the Persian Gulf, and refrained at our instance from pursuing his victory—at least for the present.

A few years later the Sultan called once more upon his powerful Egyptian vassal for service in a yet more dangerous field. The Greeks were waging their long and heroic struggle for independence and, in spite of many vicissitudes, with a measure of success which commanded the sympathies of Europe and strained the resources of

an enfeebled Turkey almost to the breaking point. In 1821 an Egyptian force had saved Crete for the time being for the Sultan, and as his reward, Mehemet Ali was appointed titular Pasha of the island. In 1824 he was appointed Pasha of the Morea, but in this case the title had still to be made good by force of arms. Mehemet Ali selected his favourite son Ibrahim, the conqueror of the Wahabis, to proceed to Greece in command of a large military and naval expedition which showed to the astonished Western world what a formidable weapon the genius of a great ruler had already fashioned in the course of a few years out of the almost unsuspected wealth of Egypt. Under Ibrahim's skilful but ruthless leadership the tide of victory turned steadily once more in Turkey's favour. The Greek leaders quarrelled amongst themselves. Missolonghi and Athens fell. Thousands of Greek women and children were shipped off as slaves to Egypt. But the cruelties which Ibrahim perpetrated at last exhausted the patience of Europe, and as a consequence of the London Convention of 1826 Great Britain, France, and Russia, in spite of Austrian opposition, dispatched their combined fleets to cruise off the coast of Greece. After some period of hesitation and abortive negotiation, the Turco-Egyptian fleet was sunk in the bay of Navarino on October 20th, 1827, and just a year later, under Admiral Codrington's threat to bombard Alexandria, Mehemet Ali at last issued orders for the prompt evacuation of the Morea. Ibrahim brought back to Egypt less than half the forces with which he had embarked on his great adventure, but Mehemet Ali thought he had taken the measure both of Turkey and of Europe.

His opportunity came when the Sultan made a further call upon him. Canning was dead and Turkey had as usual reckoned upon the jealousies of the European Powers to escape the consequences of Navarino and delay recognition of Greek independence. Russia, taking the law into her own hands, sent her armies across the Danube and was threatening the Ottoman dominions in Asia

Early in 1829 Mehemet Ali received orders from Constantinople to send his fleet to the Golden Horn and to furnish a contingent of 20,000 men for the campaign in Asia. He did not openly refuse to obey the Imperial commands, but he had reason to distrust the Sultan's good faith and perhaps also his chances in a war against Russia. During the Morean expedition, when the Sultan was growing jealous of Ibrahim's fame as a victorious leader of Islam, there had been a plot to get the Egyptian army into Turkish transports and bring it to Constantinople to await the Sultan's pleasure, which might have taken the same form as it had with the ill-fated Janissaries. He temporised until the Turkish defeats and the Peace of Adrianople in 1829 had given the full measure of Turkey's weakness.

The sacrifices he had made in Arabia and in Morea for his Ottoman master had earned for him as yet no adequate reward. Like the Pharaohs of old, he cast his eyes across the desert of Sinai to the more fertile land of Syria. He asked for the Pashalik of Acre in lieu of that of the Morea, which had become an empty title. Acre was, moreover, a real thorn in his flesh. For it had become a sanctuary for thousands of his own subjects who had sought refuge there from military recruitment and other exactions. He demanded in the first place that these should be handed over to him. But he had to reckon with the bitter personal enmity of Khusrev, the Ottoman Vizier, who now stood high in the Sultan's favour—"a shrewd, bold, illiterate barbarian," as Sir Henry Bulwer describes him, who "was ready to have every man in the Empire drowned, poisoned or decapitated if it was necessary to carry out the views of himself or his master." He had once in Cairo owed his life to Mehemet Ali, and the humiliation of it never ceased to rankle. He caused a sarcastic refusal to be sent to Mehemet Ali, reminding him that the natives of Egypt were not his chattels and were free to settle wherever they chose under the Sultan's "beneficent" rule. Such a

message from Khusrev filled the cup of Mehemet Ali's resentment. He did not at once venture upon open rebellion against the Sultan. His feud was, he alleged, only with Khusrev, who was betraying the interest of their common lord and master. But he nevertheless crossed the Rubicon when an army under his son Ibrahim marched at the end of 1831 into Palestine, and joining up with the Egyptian fleet at Jaffa proceeded to take Acre by storm. Nor did an Imperial Firman of May 2nd, 1832, declaring Mehemet Ali an outlaw and deposing him from the Pashalik of Egypt, have any terrors for him. Ibrahim routed all the forces hurriedly moved up against him from Asia Minor. He took Homs, Hama, and Aleppo in his stride, and by the end of the year he had utterly defeated a great Turkish army in the heart of Asia Minor and occupied Konia, the ancient capital of the Ottoman Sultans, where the sword of Empire is still preserved with which each in turn receives his investiture on succeeding to the throne of Othman. Ibrahim was barely more than a week's march from Constantinople, and no Turkish force could have arrested his triumphant progress.

The moment, however, had come when he and Mehemet Ali were to pay for the political blunder of their Morean adventure and the savagery that had further aggravated it. By throwing in his lot with the East against the West and assisting Turkey to crush the Greek rebellion, Mehemet Ali had alienated the good will of Europe which he had begun to gain by his friendly and liberal attitude towards foreigners in Egypt. The European Powers, alarmed at the prospect of an immediate dissolution of the Ottoman Empire which Ibrahim's astounding victories were rapidly opening up, hastened to intervene at Cairo and at Constantinople. Russia offered the Sultan substantial military support against the Egyptian upstart whom the whole Turkish population had acclaimed as a mightier Defender of the Faith than their own degenerate Sultan. France, who hoped for great things for her own interests in Egypt from Mehemet Ali's leanings

towards her people, sat on the fence. Palmerston, dreading to see the Sultan indebted to Russia alone for the preservation of his Empire, urged him to make his peace direct with Mehemet Ali, who himself was too much of a statesman to grasp at more than he could reasonably hope to hold. British advice carried the day. A convention signed at Kutahia stayed the Egyptian advance. The Imperial Firman of outlawry against Mehemet Ali was solemnly revoked, and another one, issued on May 6th, 1833, granted him anew the Pashalik of Egypt and added that of the whole of Syria, including even the doubtful province of Adana.

As it was, Mehemet Ali had overreached himself. Even victorious campaigns are costly, and in order to recoup himself he had to grind the last piastre not only out of his own people in Egypt, but out of his new subjects in Syria. His son Ibrahim, though less successful as an administrator than as a general, pleaded for moderation, but in vain. Risings began to take place, first amongst the unruly mountaineers of the Syrian Lebanon and Ante-Lebanon, and then in other parts of the country. They had never bent patiently under the yoke as the Egyptian *fellaheen* had been accustomed to do for centuries, and if the Turks had chastised them with rods, their Egyptian masters scourged them with scorpions. Even Ibrahim's well-meant attempts to restrain the Mahomedans and Christians of Syria from flying at each other's throats in accordance with time-honoured traditions told against him. The Sultan saw his chance of reversing the Convention of Kutahia, and in 1839 he declared war once more upon his formidable vassal. But with no better luck than before. Ibrahim displayed once more his splendid qualities in the field. He smote a large Turkish army hip and thigh at Nezib, though the Turkish Commander-in-Chief had on his staff, but despised the advice of, a young Prussian officer, von Moltke, who was afterwards to be Chief of the Staff to the victorious Prussian armies in the great wars of 1866

and 1870, and whose favourite pupil, von der Goltz, became the chief instrument and to some extent the inspirer of William II's fateful determination to use Turkey as "Germany's bridgehead to world dominion." But Nezib was a Pyrrhic victory for Ibrahim. Palmerston had come to regard Mehemet Ali as a danger to the peace of Europe in general and to British interests in particular. He ascribed his bold front, not altogether without reason, to French encouragement. For Mehemet Ali was putting forward the claim with which Egypt has been once more ringing—the claim to "complete independence." This was too much for Palmerston. "The more I reflect," he wrote to Bulwer, the British Ambassador in Paris, "the more I am convinced that there can be no permanent settlement without making Mehemet Ali withdraw into his original shell of Egypt." He was prepared to compel his withdrawal, even if it meant a breach with France, though he was at one moment willing to accept a compromise which would have left Mehemet Ali in possession of Palestine. But the Pasha preferred to build upon the promise of French support, until it finally failed him with the retirement of Thiers and the appointment in his stead of Guizot, who flinched from the prospect of France's isolation. For England, Austria, and Russia were now at one with Turkey to drive the Egyptians out of the whole of Syria. Ibrahim conducted another gallant but losing campaign. The capture of Acre from the Turks had been the initial feat of arms of his victorious advance into Syria and Asia Minor in 1832. In 1839 he lost it back to a Turkish force supported by British and Austrian ships, and a few days later began the disastrous evacuation which ended Mehemet Ali's dream of empire outside Egypt.

Nevertheless, he snatched one brand from the burning. At the price of an abject letter of submission, all the more bitter for him to write as it had to be addressed to his old implacable enemy, Khusrev, he obtained from the Sultan with the consent of the Powers, in return for

the abandonment of all claims to Syria, a Firman making the Pashalik of Egypt hereditary in his family and autonomous. Egyptian Nationalists make great play with the autonomy which Mehemet Ali wrung out of the Sultan. But they forget that it was subject to many not unimportant reservations which effectively clipped the old lion's claws. The strength of the military and naval forces he was henceforth allowed to maintain was very drastically reduced. He remained a vassal of the Ottoman Empire, and in its official hierarchy the rank assigned to him was actually inferior to that of the Sheikh-ul-Islam and of the Grand Vizier—as Abdul Hamid was fond of reminding the ex-Khedive Abbas when his visits to Constantinople happened to be inopportune.

Mehemet Ali was then over seventy, and he never recovered from the blow that had shattered the ambitions of a lifetime. He had travelled a long way towards his goal, but he had failed to reach it, and he measured his failure, not by what he had accomplished, but by what he had set himself to accomplish. The last years of his life were fraught with trouble. There were floods and plagues. The country was depopulated and poverty-stricken. As his hand grew weaker the machinery of government lacked the driving power which he alone had supplied. His armies had been disbanded and his arsenals and factories had to be scrapped. He quarrelled for a time with his favourite son Ibrahim, who after all never lived to succeed him, though he lived just long enough to take over the reins for a short time when his father's faculties began to give way. The end came in 1849, but for a whole year before he actually passed away the great Pasha had sunk into senile helplessness.

No authoritative life of Mehemet Ali has yet been written. Mr. D. A. Cameron's "Egypt in the Nineteenth Century" gives a graphic, if not altogether dispassionate, sketch of his romantic career and striking personality. But he admits the difficulty of doing justice to the man's character. No Oriental ruler has had warmer

admirers and more bitter detractors amongst the Europeans who had personal knowledge of him, but they observed him in the light of the fierce international rivalries of which he was himself in a great measure both the occasion and the victim. That Mehemet Ali had many of the elements of greatness is beyond dispute, whilst most of his shortcomings may fairly be imputed to the age in which he lived and the surroundings in which he had to carve out his own fortunes. That he is entitled to take a foremost rank amongst those who have made history will be least of all denied by anyone concerned to study the present situation in Egypt. For, though in many respects he would scarcely recognise the work of his own hands in the Egypt of to-day, he was the maker of modern Egypt, for better and for worse. It is to him that the Egyptians owe the first recognition of any right of private ownership in land. According to the late Yakub Artin Pasha, a distinguished Armenian, whose "Propriété foncière en Egypte" is still the standard work on the subject, the bargain which Joseph struck with the Egyptians as recorded in the Book of Genesis, when "the land became Pharaoh's," had held good for more than thirty centuries. They had continued to till the land in common and to be held responsible in common by villages or groups of villages to the Pharaoh of the day for his fifth, or more often for whatever share of the produce his needs or his rapacity chose to exact. The system had endured under the Ptolemies and the Romans and the Byzantines. When the Arabs poured into Egypt in the seventh century, there was so little resistance that it was doubtful whether under Mahomedan law the country could be dealt with as a land conquered by the sword of Islam or should not properly be given the benefit of having made peaceful submission—a vital question determining as a rule the rights to be granted to the population in respect of the tenure of land under Mahomedan rule. That the former opinion prevailed seems to be shown by the fact that in the mosques of Egypt

the officiating *Imam* still ascends the pulpit at th prayer carrying a sword, even if it be only a sword, as the symbol of conquest. But in pract little effect was given to that opinion. The Omar treated the Egyptians altogether wit leniency and respected their ancient land syste was it radically changed under the Mameluke before or after the Turkish conquest. But at a especially when the country passed under so domination or in periods of internal strife and a great inroads were made upon the system, and the sive masters for the time being of Egypt carved themselves individually, and for their famili followers, huge estates which were treated as their property, and were held under many varying cor They always remained, however, tenancies at wi the same arbitrary power that had granted ther at any time and constantly did resume then there was one feature more or less common to tl Keeping for themselves the whole revenue yiel the labour of the *fellaheen*, who became their ow these holders ceased to contribute anything to the expenditure of the State, and the latter had to be increased levies on the rest of the *fellaheen* com In the latter part of the Mameluke period this cou be done by farming out large districts to revenue col who bled the *fellaheen* white, and gradually a proprietary rights of their own. Thus there had little by little a confused tangle of predatory ri the land which left none whatever to the w peasantry who actually tilled the soil.

Mehemet Ali cut through the tangle in his own ma fashion. He confiscated all the Mamelukes' and then asserted with regard to the rest the Ph right of pre-eminent ownership which had ne principle lapsed. Thereupon he ordered a rough ca survey of the whole cultivated area of Egypt, and duced the system of internal administration of

the nomenclature subsists to the present day—a Mudir at the head of each province, a Mamour in each Merkez or district, and Omdehs as official headmen of each village. The land, hitherto held in common by the *fellaheen* who were in common responsible for the taxation levied by the State, was distributed amongst them individually so that according to the quality of the soil each adult *fellah* received from three to five acres, which became practically his freehold property and were entered in his name in the cadastral registers. To Mehemet Ali's keen personal interest in the scheme his own seal affixed to the land registers in most of the Mudiriehs bears witness. It was a great and far-reaching reform, and that he borrowed the main lines from France says no little for the insight he had acquired into European conditions, for the French Revolution had then only recently evolved out of the chaos of the old *régime* a land system which created a great and prosperous peasant proprietary. Unfortunately, Mehemet Ali's practice fell desperately below the excellence of his theory. To meet the expenses of the great wars on which he was constantly engaged he had to impose taxation which, even if levied by more regular methods, was almost as crushing as the unregulated spoliation under the Mamelukes, and gradually his Mudirs and Mamours and Omdehs had to have recourse to the same methods as the revenue-farmers in the Mameluke days to screw the last piastre out of the helpless *fellaheen*, whilst recruitment for the armies which demanded incessant reinforcements became an even worse terror than the *kurbash* of the tax collector and the interminable *corvées*.

At the same time, if Mehemet Ali's exactions were at times quite merciless, he did not spend the proceeds on sloth and luxury. He had the European's activity of mind and body. He liked sometimes to call himself a Macedonian, and it was in the true spirit of Alexander the Great that, quite early in his reign, he dispatched two of his sons to conquer the Sudan, bidding them if possible

find their way ultimately down the N
Atlantic, or across the Sahara to the M
They failed to get beyond the Blue and th
but they reduced the Sudanese to subjectior
Khartum, and deplorable as were the later
of Egyptian misrule, it must be counted
Ali's credit that he was the first to open up
of the Dark Continent. He no doubt squand
sums in organising large armies on a new n
the purchase or building of fleets which Egy
before possessed. But he also spent a g
public works which have endured. He
port of Alexandria by digging the Mahm
to connect with the Nile. He realised th
for a large expansion of the cultivable area
means of extended irrigation works, and the
on the Nile just below Cairo was built in his c
remained a magnificent failure till British er
pleted it and strengthened it after the
The huge trading monopolies which he cre
arsenals and factories which he erected a
at great cost were economically unsound
gave the first great impetus to the commerce
which, directed afterwards into wiser ch
contributed in a large measure to the prese
of Egypt. A Mahomedan by birth, he live
life decently and soberly according to tl
customs of Islam, but rarely and only
political stress was he tempted to appeal to
fanaticism. He was fully alive to the value
civilisation and of European education. Fr
of view he was entirely uneducated, and he
to read and write in middle age, but he saw th
of educating Egyptian youths for the publi
the country. The first schools he started wit
the French Dr. Clot Bey were medical sch
doctors for the army. Other schools follo
bribed his people to send their sons to th

by defraying all the expenses, but by actually paying them to be taught. The more promising pupils were sent, also at his expense, to complete their education in France, or more rarely in England. He encouraged Europeans to come to Egypt for purposes of trade as well as of travel. It was then that the foreign settlements began to develop which have gradually come to play the chief part in the commercial and industrial and financial life of Egypt. The French scientific mission which had accompanied Napoleon's expedition to Egypt had struck his imagination, and when he sent his sons to conquer the Sudan he invited French *savants* to join them. He can hardly be blamed if he was sometimes unable to discriminate between vulgar adventurers and worthier representatives of European culture. He lacked knowledge, though he was eager for it, and whether in his varied friendships or in his many speculative undertakings, it was his inexperience rather than his usually sound instinct that was his undoing. If he turned to Frenchmen for advice and help in preference to Englishmen, it was but the natural consequence of political developments that had made him regard France rather than England as his friend.

Though it was in the smashing defeat of the small British force landed in Egypt in 1807 that Mehemet Ali had laid the foundations of his fortune, he was too great a soldier to overrate the significance of a success mainly due to incompetent British leadership. He had seen what British soldiers were capable of doing when he had fought side by side with them under Abercrombie on his first arrival in Egypt, and he had appreciated, as few Orientals ever do, the value of British sea-power. As far back as 1815 he had confided to the traveller Burckhardt, who fell in with him in the heart of Arabia during his Wahabi campaign, his belief that "England must some day take Egypt as her share of the spoil of the Turkish Empire." "For," as he put it with the rough force of an Eastern proverb, "the big fish swallow the

small." He professed even to be afraid lest Wellington's veterans should be at once switched off for the conquest of Egypt. As time passed, his apprehensions grew less, and, like the Sultan, he learnt to speculate on the dissensions of Europe. But he remained always reluctant to incur the enmity of Great Britain. He was too clear-sighted to ignore her interests in a country which lay athwart her shortest line of communications with India when steamers replaced sailing ships, and, instead of nourishing resentment against her for her share in his great discomfiture, he came round to the view that Egypt's salvation might well lie in seeking to associate her interests more closely with those of Great Britain by recognising freely her right of way across Egyptian territory and giving her increased facilities for using it. The scheme for digging a ship canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, which had already appealed to the imagination of Bonaparte, did not mature in Mehemet Ali's days, but many years before Lesseps carried it through it had found warm advocates amongst the British rulers of India, and Mehemet Ali gave every assistance to the Commission which went out in 1847 to study the question on the spot. If it was not carried out under British auspices, the blame lies not on Mehemet Ali but on the short-sighted opposition of our own people at home. To his cordial co-operation a large measure of credit may at any rate be given for the success which in 1845 at last attended Waghorn's persevering efforts to open up the "Overland Route" for mails and passengers to India and China across the Delta through Alexandria and Suez—an enterprise which prepared the way for the Suez Canal. Waghorn in return defended the cause of his great patron with unflagging devotion in England, and he displayed not only his personal gratitude, but perhaps greater political wisdom than the British Ministers of the day possessed, when he wrote a pamphlet on "Egypt in 1837," in which he appealed to British members of Parliament "to show

some sort of sympathy for Egypt instead of that indifference to her interests which permits her to be sacrificed to the bolstering up of Turkey."

Had Palmerston's mind not been obsessed with the dread of Russia and jealousy of France, which drove him at crucial moments to support the Sultan against Mehemet Ali, it is conceivable that British influence, and with it a broader and more liberal conception of economic and administrative progress, would have gained a hold on the great Pasha which might have transformed the future history of Egypt. Many Frenchmen served him well, but France had not the colonial experience which Great Britain had already then acquired. French statesmen thought only of courting Mehemet Ali's friendship as that of a valuable chessman on the crowded board of international diplomacy. What he did with his own people they cared not at all. Had British statesmen taken him in hand, they might have taught him the principles which they themselves were beginning to apply to the governance of the greatest of our own Oriental dependencies, that the secret of strength lay in the welfare and contentment of the masses. For with all his faults, and imbued as he was with the traditions of Oriental despotism, Mehemet Ali was easily receptive of new ideas. In his own selfish way, he took a genuine pride in the country to which his star had guided him. "I love Egypt," he had told Burckhardt, "with the ardour of a lover, and if I had ten thousand lives, I would willingly sacrifice them all to possess her." He did not make of Egypt a nation, for, himself an alien by birth, the people of Egypt were so little to him that he never even learnt to speak their language. Yet by giving Egypt for the first time a place and a name in modern history, and securing, at the cost of however tremendous sacrifices, a measure of autonomy which at least released her from the direct grip of predatory Turkish officials, he created in the rising generations of Egyptians a sense of pride in their country which became

the germ of Egyptian Nationalism. The Nationalists of to-day forget that the autonomy he wrung from the Sublime Porte never meant freedom for their forefathers, but only freedom for himself to rule them according to his own will; that the chosen instruments of his will remained for the most part aliens in stock and language as he himself was; that he and his successors continued to treat the Egyptian masses as their chattels until the British Occupation; but the instinct is nevertheless not wholly unsound which prompts them to look upon Mehemet Ali as not only the creator of modern Egypt but the pioneer of Egyptian Nationalism.

CHAPTER II

FROM MEHEMET ALI TO THE OCCUPATION

NEITHER of Mehemet Ali's immediate successors left any deep impress on the history of Egypt. Abbas I, who as the eldest agnate had taken over the reins after the death of Ibrahim during the last melancholy months of the old Pasha's dotage, was a solitary and sinister figure, seeking in retirement not so much a refuge from the cares of State as privacy for the indulgence of his morbid cruelty. Ibrahim had sometimes urged his father to "let the people alone," and had he lived, he might have relaxed the harshness without destroying the structure of Mehemet Ali's system of administration. Abbas did not even wait for his grandfather to pass away before setting himself to undo out of sheer hatred all that the great Pasha had done. He resented above all the growth of European interests and European influence. He disliked foreigners of all nationalities. He would gladly have closed the doors of Egypt to all of them impartially and put the clock back to the old days before the nineteenth century when Egypt, forgotten by the outer world, could ignore its existence. He posed as a devout Mahomedan to whom the Infidel and all his works were anathema. He dismissed a number of European officials and closed the schools in which the rudiments of European education had been taught. He regarded European trade and industry as insidious channels for the infiltration of European influence, and though he could not interfere with them openly in defiance

of existing treaties, he proceeded to abolish all the trade monopolies and to close the factories created by Mehemet Ali which had brought him into direct contact with the European merchants. To that extent the *fellaheen*, for whom Abbas had even less pity than his grandfather, benefited by his reversal of Mehemet Ali's policy, for it restored to them the advantages of a free market for their produce. They benefited also by a large reduction of the Egyptian army, which was cut down to 9,000 men, and they welcomed the momentary relief from the intolerable pressure of the *corvée* brought by the abandonment of many public works which Mehemet Ali had started. But if Abbas ever contemplated any constructive policy to follow the uprooting of Mehemet Ali's work, he was not given time to disclose it. For within five years of his accession he was murdered in his palace by two of his slaves, leaving none to mourn him. Sullen and morose, his life was a mystery to his own people, who whispered to one another revolting tales of the cruelties in which he delighted. To the foreigners in Egypt he stood for insane reaction and fanaticism.

Saïd, who succeeded him, was a younger son of Mehemet Ali, and if he inherited very little of his father's ability, he carried to still greater lengths his liking for European customs and European society. He had had a French education, he was of a tolerant and cheerful disposition, and he was never seen to more advantage than when he was dispensing hospitality. His vanity was unbounded and he prided himself on being a good administrator, because the country had begun to recover its extraordinary natural prosperity with more than fifteen years of external peace. There was no public debt, and a revenue of about £3,000,000 amply covered expenditure. The first railway in Egypt between Alexandria and Cairo had been built in his predecessor's time at the instance of Great Britain. Saïd steadily extended the railway system and developed the canals for purposes both of transportation and of

irrigation. He was a bit of a farmer and he liked to display a paternal interest in the *fellaheen*, who obtained some further recognition of their rights in the land. He hated quarrelling with anyone, and he tried not unsuccessfully to cultivate friendly relations with all the Powers. He readily gave permission for British troops to be rushed across Egypt during the Indian Mutiny; he gave a concession to the Eastern Telegraph Company and welcomed the foundation of an English bank. The most important enterprise with which his name will be connected in history was the Suez Canal, for which he granted the original concession in 1856 under political pressure from France, and perhaps even more under the personal pressure of Lesseps, whom he had known and liked from his boyhood. Its construction proved a far heavier drain upon the financial resources of Egypt than he was led at the time to anticipate, and whether it has really enured on the whole to the benefit of Egypt is still open to debate. British opposition to the scheme soon became as obsolete as the scepticism which at the time scorned even its feasibility. It has succeeded beyond all calculation, and it has certainly exercised a great and perhaps decisive influence on the destinies of Egypt. To that extent Saïd, though a man of no importance, must rank with Mehemet Ali as a maker of modern Egypt. But just as, rightly or wrongly, he could not bring himself to deny Lesseps, so, in smaller matters, he could never say "No" to his friends, and many were the foreign adventurers who wormed themselves into his friendship. His very generosity prompted him to extravagance, and he started Egyptian finance on the downward plane by being the first to contract a foreign loan on the European money market. He died soon afterwards, still a relatively young man, and the succession passed to his nephew Ismail, a son of Ibrahim, who was only thirty-three years old and soon followed Saïd down the same plane with immeasurably greater recklessness and rapidity.

Ismail was in many respects a bigger man than Saïd but with vices where Saïd had only displayed weaknesses Saïd had been foolishly generous; Ismail became a fraudulent spendthrift. Saïd had been grossly self indulgent, especially in the pleasures of the table; Ismail was a sensuous, if more refined, *jouisseur*. Saïd had a childish conceit of himself; Ismail was devoured with unbounded megalomania. Yet he had something too of his grandfather's finer ambitions, and also of his ruthlessness. It was he who gave Sir Samuel Baker full powers to extend his authority as Governor-General of the Sudan to the Equatorial provinces, and it was he who afterwards asked for Chinese Gordon, for whose curiously erratic and quixotic genius he had an almost superstitious admiration. At the same time the horrible misgovernment, which neither Baker nor Gordon could do more than mitigate, left Ismail personally quite cold. He had a kindly as well as a cruel side to his nature, and would often go out of his way to relieve individual cases of distress that were brought to his notice. But he was utterly indifferent to the sufferings of his subjects in the aggregate, and where his own safety or his cupidity were involved, he would strike mercilessly at his closest friend. I visited Egypt for the first time in the last years of his reign. His one trusted Minister was then the Finance Minister, Ismail Sadik Mufettish, reputed to be his foster-brother. His influence with the Khedive was believed to be unbounded, and clients flocked every day to his ante-chambers in larger crowds than even to Abdeen Palace. The state in which he lived vied with the Khedive's. He had five or six palaces of his own in Cairo and immense estates all over the country. One morning rumour had it that the famous Mufettish had suddenly disappeared. Cairo shivered with excitement, though none dared to express either horror or relief, though relief predominated, as the hand of the Mufettish had been even heavier than that of the Khedive. And on this occasion rumour was no lying jade. In the

early morning the Minister, all-powerful the day before, who had but just dined at his master's table, had been dragged out of bed and conveyed in one of the closed carriages of the *hareem* down to the Nile, where he was put on to the Khedivial steamer, which steamed at once up the river. None ventured to enquire as to his fate. Only a scar as of teeth on the hand of the officer charged to see him on board was said to tell a grim tale of some last desperate struggle for freedom or for life. He was gone. His palaces and his estates and the vast fortune he had accumulated were confiscated, his great establishments scattered, and his slaves put up to private auction. Yet the Khedive appeared the same night at the Opera, which was one of his many extravagant hobbies, and a few days later I saw him at one of the great functions at which he delighted in displaying a more than royal and slightly barbaric hospitality, though his Court was modelled on European lines. He was stout and jovial, and chatted merrily in his curious slipshod French, almost every sentence ending irrelevantly with *comme-ci, comme-ça, etc.* He had a pleasant word for all his visitors and a ready compliment for every European lady. No one could look more free from black care, let alone from the shadow of black deeds.

Nevertheless, he was already desperately far gone on his Rake's Progress. The whole story of his reign is one of colossal and inept extravagance, and it is after all so sordid a story that it would scarcely deserve to be recalled, had it not been pregnant with consequences of decisive importance to Egypt and to Britain. It can be recalled very briefly, for there is scarcely anything of value to be placed against the monotonous record of debts piled on to debts with increasing frequency and on more and more usurious terms, though, thanks largely to the tremendous rise in the price of cotton during the American Civil War, the Egyptian revenue had risen to about £7,000,000 per annum. Within the first five years of his reign he had borrowed £11,000,000 abroad and

burdened his exchequer with a floating debt of £3(
whilst he had agreed to increase the tribute
Turkey from £320,000 to £600,000 a year, in r
a Firman substituting primogeniture for the old
law of succession to the throne, and the grap
new-fangled title of Khedive in lieu of the olc
Pasha of Egypt. Another loan for £11,890,00
doubled the existing funded debt, tided him over
visit to Constantinople and the magnificent f
which marked the opening of the Suez Canal
when the Empress Eugénie was the most brillia
many royal and countless other guests invited to t
pageant from all parts of the world.

The Sultan, fearing probably that his spe
vassal would end by spoiling the European money
on which he himself was making heavy calls, s
forbade him to raise any more loans in Europe
his specific consent, and to get this veto wit
the Khedive had to make another ruinous pilgri
Constantinople, where, according to the British
sador, Sir Henry Elliot, a sum of £900,000 passe
from Ismail's hands into those of the Sultan
Aziz. This was in 1872, after the Mufettish ha
with very scant success, to raise the wind in Eg
a law styled the *Mukabalah*, which promised a
title and a future reduction of 50 per cent. on t
tax to every landowner who at once paid six
taxes in advance. Recourse had to be quickly n
another loan for a record amount of £32,000,000
and at 8 instead of 7 per cent., which after
deductions yielded little more than £12,000,000 i
In 1874 a last and much smaller loan, for a tr
£3,000,000, was placed with great difficulty
and absolutely the only security that Ismail cou
pledge in 1875 were his Founder's Shares in th
Canal, and he had already raised money on the div
accruing from them for the next twenty years.
Beaconsfield slipped in and purchased them for £4,0

not only doing a magnificent stroke of business for the British Treasury, but demonstrating to the whole world that the British Government did not intend to let Egypt go any further headlong to ruin.

When the final crash came on April 8th, 1876, with the suspension of payment of Egyptian Treasury bills, the public debt of Egypt, which had amounted only to £3,293,000 in 1863 at the time of Ismail's accession, had risen to over £94,090,000, whereof £68,000,000 was funded and £26,000,000 floating. "Roughly speaking," writes Lord Cromer, than whom there can be no better authority, "it may be said that Ismail added on an average about £7,000,000 a year for thirteen years to the debt of Egypt, and that for all practical purposes the whole of the borrowed money, except £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal, was squandered," and, it may be added, squandered on vulgar luxury and empty ostentation. For during the same period, as the subsequent financial inquiry showed, the ordinary revenue of the country, also about £7,000,000 a year, had yielded in the aggregate almost exactly the same sum—£94,000,000—that Ismail had borrowed, and had, within perhaps £3,000,000 altogether, provided enough to cover all the legitimate expenditure incurred on the administration of the country and on public works of unquestionable utility, and even on the payment of the Turkish tribute and a good many other items of more questionable usefulness or policy. Something was done even during Ismail's reign for the material development of the country; new canals had added more than a fifth to the cultivable area; a great network of telegraphs covering 6,000 miles had been carried right up to the Sudan; instead of 250 miles of railway there were now 1,200; the harbour works of Suez and Alexandria were enlarged; the foreign trade of Egypt, import and export, had multiplied threefold. This much may be placed to his credit, and his grandiose policy of expansion in the Sudan, and even his war with Abyssinia, disastrous as were its

results, may be given the benefit of the doubt. Some excuse too may be found for the four or five millions he spent at Constantinople to secure the alteration of the Law of Succession in favour of his eldest son, and to rid Egypt of a few more of the restrictions which still limited her autonomy. But all this might have been done without the insensate borrowings which loaded Egypt with a heavy permanent debt and never even temporarily eased the taxpayer's shoulders.

For never even under her Mameluke slave-kings, who at least left some splendid monuments behind them to redeem their names from oblivion, nor under Mehemet Ali, who gave Egypt a new status in the world, did the Egyptian people groan under more pitiless oppression than under the vainglorious rule of Ismail, barren from beginning to end of all great achievement. A wild Nationalist, whom I met in Cairo, ventured to carry his disparagement of British control to the extreme length of telling me that I ought to have seen Egypt in the days of freedom and prosperity which she enjoyed under her own rulers before the British occupation. "Even," I inquired, "under Ismail?" "Yes, even under Ismail," was his reply. I asked him politely how old he was, though it was evident he was too young to have seen Ismail's Egypt with his own eyes. I unfortunately was not too young, and I proceeded to describe to him what I had seen in the last years of Ismail's reign, when Egypt was "enjoying freedom and prosperity under one of her own rulers"; the half-starved *fellaheen* dragged away from their own fields to work on the huge estates which the Khedive and his favoured pashas had filched from them; the forced labour of the *corvée*, under the ever-present menace of the whip, to keep the perennial canals running for the benefit of others; the press-gangs employed to drive into the depots the army recruits who were too poor to buy exemption from what they regarded, too often rightly, as an irrevocable sentence of death in the far-away Sudan; the miserable mud villages frequently

deserted because even the *kurbash* applied to the soles of the *fellaheen's* feet could no longer wring a piastre out of them to meet taxes often levied three or four times over, and so even their land had been taken away from them in payment; the crowds of wailing women and emaciated children begging for a husk of maize; misery and despair up and down that incomparable valley of the Nile whilst Ismail held his Court in Cairo, and those who preyed upon him, Egyptians and Europeans alike, battened on his profligate extravagance.

My Nationalist friend, who was a doctor, shifted his ground and assured me that at any rate far more encouragement was given to education, and especially to education for the scientific professions, than under the British. I invited him to read for himself the description given by Dr. Sandwith of the Kasr-el-Aini Hospital, then the only, and still the chief, general hospital in Cairo, as he saw it when he was first placed in charge of it after the Occupation. I happen to be one of the few foreigners probably now living who ever visited it before the Occupation, and I could therefore vouch, not, of course, for all the details contained in Dr. Sandwith's report, but for the truth of the appalling picture which it presents.

"The building consisted of a quadrangle surrounding waste land, studded with huge *lebbek* trees, which kept air and light from the windows. The walls contained nests of living snakes, in holes from which the plaster had long crumbled away. The ground floor was composed chiefly of dark, damp store-rooms, for here were situated the central stores of equipment for all the Government hospitals. The pharmacy was the one bright and fairly clean place, and near by were several bins full of mouldy sulphate of iron, which seems to have been a favourite antiseptic against cholera. The patients' wards, as now, were in the upper two stories, but so closed in by doors and windows that there was an overpowering smell, and practically no ventilation, for most of them were very small, measuring only 17 ft. by 13 ft. The floors were made of broken, ill-fitting 'ballats,' which, being porous, soaked in any septic liquids, while the rough walls and wooden ceilings were infested with bugs. The beds were in the same condition, for they were wooden planks

resting on iron trestles, so that the patients often preferred to sleep in the corridors at night to try and escape from the vermin. There was practically no furniture except dirty tin drinking pots and platters. At night there were no candles available, and the corridors were dimly lighted by a narrow wick floating in oil. But the pervading horror of the hospital was the smell from the privies, which were built into the walls, and communicated directly with huge underground culverts, blocked at low Nile, and at other times allowed to empty themselves into the river. The so-called drains from the dissecting room and dead-house also flowed into the Nile about a mile above the intake of the water supply of the city. Water was somewhat scarce in those days, and was brought upstairs by men carrying goat-skins from a tap near the entrance of the hospital. The filtered water supply was unknown. . . . In the middle of the kitchen there was an open hole in the floor, leading into a cesspool, for the reception of offal and bones. . . . The laundry was in the open air, supplied with muddy, cold water, and a series of boilers in which the water never boiled. It was, therefore, not to be wondered at that linen often came back to the wards covered with lice. Perhaps it is not surprising that hardly any single soul ever went to the hospital of his own free will, the exception being beggars who were driven there by poverty. The public of Cairo firmly believed that the hospital was merely a prelude to the cemetery, and that the sick were beaten and robbed by the attendants, and then poisoned by the doctors. And yet the number of hospital patients was often four hundred, made up of soldiers, policemen, Government employés, prisoners, foundlings, hospital children, idiots, and prostitutes, who sometimes numbered as many as two hundred, and converted their section into a pandemonium. All these different classes were kept there by order of the Governor. . . . There was no nursing, the attendants consisting entirely of worn-out old soldiers, who had been dismissed from the army, with, of course, no moral control over the patients. Serious cases could not be kept in bed, and trivial cases were allowed to lie in bed all day if they wished it. There was a systematic absence of clinical teaching, note-taking, temperature records, urine testing, or any thorough physical examination. The medical diagnosis seldom advanced beyond 'anæmia' or 'gastric catarrh.' The dispenser accompanied the doctor on his round, wrote the prescriptions on a sheet of paper, copied them afterwards into a book, and then administered the medicine of twenty-four hours all in one dose. The

professors of surgery were quite ignorant of cleanliness and antiseptics, and were so fearful of anæsthetics that most major operations, including lithotomy, were usually done without them. Three hundred pounds worth of surgical instruments lay neglected in the hospital, because no one in Egypt was capable of repairing them, until we introduced an English instrument-maker. Refractory patients were punished by confinement and by chains, anklets, and handcuffs."

This quotation affords as striking an illustration as could be found anywhere of the cruel parody of civilisation with which Ismail deceived Europe, and perhaps sometimes deceived himself, whilst he was heading straight to the ruin of his country and his own. Everything was to be on the European model, but seldom was anything more than the label copied. Laws and regulations were drawn up, often with the help of European experts, and duly promulgated by the Khedivial decree. But they never took effect. They looked well on paper, but in practice Ismail had no use for them, and, as Lord Cromer has written, who was himself an eye-witness, no one ever thought of obeying them. The principal officials concerned were indeed often ignorant of their existence. New taxes were levied, old taxes were increased, and changes introduced without any formal authority. The village Sheikh executed the orders of the Mamour, the Mamour those of the Mudir, and the Mudir those of the Inspector-General, who, again, acted "under superior order." The "superior order," which was the Khedive's, in fact constituted the law. The officials obeyed it even if it were only communicated verbally; and no taxpayer ever dreamt of challenging it. The Inspector-General of Upper Egypt, on being asked by the Commission of Inquiry to whom the taxpayer could address himself if he had any complaint to make, answered, with a *naïveté* arising from long familiarity with a system which he considered both just and natural, "With regard to the taxes, the peasant cannot complain; he knows that they are collected by 'superior

resting on iron trestles, so that the patients often preferred to sleep in the corridors at night to try and escape from the vermin. There was practically no furniture except dirty tin drinking pots and platters. At night there were no candles available, and the corridors were dimly lighted by a narrow wick floating in oil. But the pervading horror of the hospital was the smell from the privies, which were built into the walls, and communicated directly with huge underground culverts, blocked at low Nile, and at other times allowed to empty themselves into the river. The so-called drains from the dissecting room and dead-house also flowed into the Nile about a mile above the intake of the water supply of the city. Water was somewhat scarce in those days, and was brought upstairs by men carrying goat-skins from a tap near the entrance of the hospital. The filtered water supply was unknown. . . . In the middle of the kitchen there was an open hole in the floor, leading into a cesspool, for the reception of offal and bones. . . . The laundry was in the open air, supplied with muddy, cold water, and a series of boilers in which the water never boiled. It was, therefore, not to be wondered at that linen often came back to the wards covered with lice. Perhaps it is not surprising that hardly any single soul ever went to the hospital of his own free will, the exception being beggars who were driven there by poverty. The public of Cairo firmly believed that the hospital was merely a prelude to the cemetery, and that the sick were beaten and robbed by the attendants, and then poisoned by the doctors. And yet the number of hospital patients was often four hundred, made up of soldiers, policemen, Government employés, prisoners, foundlings, hospital children, idiots, and prostitutes, who sometimes numbered as many as two hundred, and converted their section into a pandemonium. All these different classes were kept there by order of the Governor. . . . There was no nursing, the attendants consisting entirely of worn-out old soldiers, who had been dismissed from the army, with, of course, no moral control over the patients. Serious cases could not be kept in bed, and trivial cases were allowed to lie in bed all day if they wished it. There was a systematic absence of clinical teaching, note-taking, temperature records, urine testing, or any thorough physical examination. The medical diagnosis seldom advanced beyond 'anæmia' or 'gastric catarrh.' The dispenser accompanied the doctor on his round, wrote the prescriptions on a sheet of paper, copied them afterwards into a book, and then administered the medicine of twenty-four hours all in one dose. The

promise of high rates of interest abroad have only themselves to thank if the promise is not fulfilled, and that their Government should meet their appeals for help by merely reminding them of the legal maxim, *Caveat emptor.* But to Egypt, at any rate, the foreign bondholders ultimately proved a blessing in disguise. For it was their influence that in the first place drove the two Great Powers chiefly interested, viz., Great Britain and France, to intervene, and it was their intervention that procured an international inquiry, without which the appalling grievances of the Egyptian people against their ruler would not have had a chance of coming to light and obtaining some measure of redress. The foreign debt of Egypt was not in itself an intolerable burden. What was intolerable was the internal system of administration, and the former became the instrument, almost cheap at the price, for reforming the latter.

Ismail was well aware of the danger which threatened his hitherto unquestioned despotism from any form of international control, and for three years he wriggled and fought to evade it. He had been compelled as early as May, 1876, within a month of his public confession of bankruptcy, to agree to the creation of an international Commission of the Public Debt, an institution which, though its composition and purpose have been from time to time substantially modified, endures to the present day as the *Caisse de la Dette Publique.* In the following year there arrived in Egypt, as the first British representative on it, the great Englishman who was destined as Sir Evelyn Baring, and, later, Lord Cromer, to play the leading part in rescuing Egypt from the slough of despond. In his memoirs he has given a graphic picture of the writhings and contortions of the Khedive to escape the most obvious penalties of his sins. Of the 900,000 acres of land he and his family had secured to themselves, he had already pledged nearly 500,000 to his creditors. He magnanimously offered to give up nearly two-thirds of what still remained unmortgaged, but it was quickly

order.' It is the Government itself that claims them. To whom should he complain ? "

But the Commission of Inquiry also established that excessive taxation, arbitrarily imposed and mercilessly collected, was only one of Ismail's methods of robbing his people. The Khedive's private estates were cultivated by forced labour. The *corvée* not only imposed fearful hardships on the hundreds of thousands of *fellaheen* who were commandeered for it. It was used also as a pretext for extorting money from those who were not actually liable to do *corvée* work. In order to fertilise the Khedive's estates, irrigation water, without which no land can be cultivated in Egypt, was denied to the poor and helpless peasant, who saw it diverted from his fields without any hope of redress, as there were no courts to which he could appeal for justice. Nor did Ismail rob only the *fellaheen*. He did not hesitate to lay hands on the moneys belonging to the Wakf, *i.e.*, to the department entrusted with the administration of Mahomedan religious endowments, and on the Beit-el-Mal, which administered the estates of minors, and on the Orphans' Fund and even on the funds of the National Schools. Everything went into his bottomless pocket. As a variant to Louis XIV's "L'état c'est moi," Ismail might well have adopted as his motto "L'état, c'est ma poche." For the State was only a huge engine of spoliation for his own benefit. He strained it till it crashed.

The crash, when it came, though it assumed in the first instance a financial shape, was in reality a collapse of the whole iniquitous system of government, which bled Egypt itself white whilst its credit abroad was being at the same time sucked dry. It has been the fashion in some quarters to denounce the foreign financiers and the foreign bondholders as the cause of Egypt's sufferings. I am not concerned to defend the financiers who took advantage of, and perhaps even encouraged, Ismail's criminal extravagance, and it may be argued that bondholders who allow themselves to be caught by the

promise of high rates of interest abroad have only themselves to thank if the promise is not fulfilled, and that their Government should meet their appeals for help by merely reminding them of the legal maxim, *Caveat emptor.* But to Egypt, at any rate, the foreign bondholders ultimately proved a blessing in disguise. For it was their influence that in the first place drove the two Great Powers chiefly interested, viz., Great Britain and France, to intervene, and it was their intervention that procured an international inquiry, without which the appalling grievances of the Egyptian people against their ruler would not have had a chance of coming to light and obtaining some measure of redress. The foreign debt of Egypt was not in itself an intolerable burden. What was intolerable was the internal system of administration, and the former became the instrument, almost cheap at the price, for reforming the latter.

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discovered that the one-third he was trying to keep was half as valuable again as the larger area he proposed to give up.

The conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry were an unpleasant pill for him to swallow, for they required the cession of the whole Khedivial estates in return for a fixed Civil List, and the adoption of the principle of Ministerial responsibility. He made a virtue of necessity and even claimed for himself the credit of the new system which was to put an end to the *erremens anciens.* He accepted a Cabinet which might well have been called the "Ministry of all the talents." The Prime Minister was Nubar, the old Armenian statesman, who had, with rare courage and perseverance, brought about the one great reform which Ismail sanctioned without absolute compulsion, viz., the creation of the Mixed Tribunals. Riaz, who had boldly stood up to the Khedive in days of stress and storm, was Minister of Interior, whilst an Englishman, Sir Rivers Wilson, took charge of Finance, and a Frenchman, M. de Blignières, of Public Works. Ismail welcomed them cordially—and then at once began to intrigue against them, and when trouble followed blandly turned on them, washing his hands of everything on the plea that, having subscribed to the principle of Ministerial responsibility, he no longer had any power. That he still had more than enough power for mischief he soon showed. Army retrenchments gave him his opportunity. He carried on a propaganda amongst the officers, who readily responded to his incitements. In the course of a turbulent demonstration Nubar and Wilson were roughly handled, and as the Khedive had taken care beforehand to warn the Consular body that he was no longer responsible for the maintenance of public order, and there was as yet no other authority behind the Ministry to give it the necessary support, Nubar had no option but to resign. The two foreign members of the Cabinet followed his example. The Khedive could boast that if he had lost the first game in the rubber

to the Commission of Inquiry, he had now won the second from his obnoxious Ministers, and he had yet a card up his sleeve with which he was confident of winning "the conqueror."

Though the British and French Governments had hitherto acted in full accord, there were sections of public opinion in both countries to which the policy of their Governments did not appeal. In Great Britain especially there were many who chose to believe that their Government was being used as a catspaw by the big financial houses interested in Egyptian loans. In France, on the contrary, there were still more who were afraid that the interests of the bondholders would be sacrificed to sentimental considerations, or who, imbued with the old jealousy of England, suspected her of trying to oust France from the pre-eminent position which, according to French traditions, rightfully belonged to her. Ismail was quick to see that in both countries there were discordant elements which he might exploit for his own purposes if he appealed to them in the modern language of democracy. His knowledge of Europeans was superficial and shallow, but he was quick-witted, and the idea of fooling Europe at its own game appealed to his unfailing sense of humour. While the foreign representatives in Cairo were discussing with their own Governments how to recover the authority they had lost with the fall of the Nubar Ministry, and had as they thought squared the circle by securing the appointment of the heir apparent, Prince Tewfik, to preside over the Cabinet, the Khedive came out in the new character of an ardent democrat who considered it his "sacred duty" to consult the opinion of his people, whose "national sentiment"—as voiced by a subservient Chamber of Notables—had "revolted" against Ministers who dealt with Egypt "as if the country were in a state of bankruptcy." The Notables had submitted to him—by superior order—a financial project of which he "fully approved." He had therefore determined to entrust

a new Cabinet, formed of men who "enjoyed the public confidence and esteem"—two of them, as a matter of fact, were notorious for their corruption—with "the preparation of electoral laws upon the model of those which existed in Europe" for the election of a parliamentary assembly "in conformity with the exigencies of the internal situation and the aspirations of the nation."

It was an audacious move, but it came too late. The final report of the Commission of Inquiry had probed too deeply the evils from which Egypt was suffering, and had made a series of far-reaching recommendations which, though as essential to the welfare of the Egyptian people as to the legitimate interests of Egypt's creditors abroad, could not possibly be carried into successful execution except with the consent and co-operation of the Egyptian ruler. That consent and co-operation it was hopeless to look for from Ismail, and so Ismail had at last to go. The British and French Governments prevailed upon the Sultan of Turkey to issue a Firman deposing him and appointing his eldest son, Tewfik, to succeed him as Khedive. Ismail, to give him his due, bowed submissively to the inevitable, and retired with dignity. This was in June, 1879, just sixteen years after his accession. He was a bad ruler with no title to fame except pre-eminence as a spendthrift, but inasmuch as the very enormity of his extravagance precipitated the downfall of the old despotic order of things, he too may be called a maker of modern Egypt.

Ismail's swan song as a champion of democratic institutions was not entirely wasted upon the Egyptian people, who understood only enough of the bewildering events of the last few years to realise that Egypt was in the throes of a great and mysterious revolution of which they were impotent spectators, and might yet have to pay the costs. The deposition of a Khedive so recently all-powerful had shaken their faith in the divine right of rulers. They had little reason to believe in the good will or the good faith of Europeans, whom they not un-

naturally still associated in their minds with the type of adventurers who had swarmed round Ismail and had too often been his willing tools, if not his tempters. In the eyes, moreover, of a Mahomedan people the sudden ascendancy of Christian Ministers in a Mahomedan State and the masterful dictation of Christian Governments seemed as great an affront to their religious as to their racial susceptibilities. For a time all these were only vague stirrings. The young Khedive had accepted a situation which he had inherited but not created. A man of no great ability or originality, but of sound judgment and unquestionable honesty, he co-operated loyally with Ministers who were, like himself, reconciled to the necessity of accepting a large measure of foreign control. The sturdy old reformer, Riaz, was installed as Prime Minister, Blignières and Baring were appointed Controllers-General, and an International Commission of Liquidation, which was mainly composed of the Commissioners of the Debt, was instituted with full powers to deal with the financial situation. For a time things worked fairly smoothly. But when Ismail had tampered with army discipline in order to upset a Cabinet which he detested he stirred up dangerous passions to which his last appeal to a new spirit of Nationalism gave an orientation he certainly never anticipated.

When Mehemet Ali first organised an Egyptian army, its officers were all Turks and Circassians and Albanians. For a long time a real Egyptian could only rise to be a non-commissioned officer. Then gradually Egyptians came to be promoted to officers' rank, and under Saïd and Ismail their numbers had steadily increased. But the old Turkish caste, still very powerful in Egypt, maintained its preponderancy in the higher ranks of the army to which the Egyptian officers but rarely obtained promotion, and it took good care that the latter should be the first to go when, under financial pressure, large reductions had to be made in the officer cadres. Ismail had always taken the ascendancy of the Turkish caste

for granted, and no one probably was more surprised and shocked than he when the news reached him in his exile that the next mutiny to occur in the Egyptian army, in February, 1880, just a year after the one he had himself instigated, was a mutiny of Egyptian-born officers against their comrades of non-Egyptian stock. The lead was taken by three colonels, one of whom, Arabi, an Egyptian of *fellah* origin, was to become the leader of the first Nationalist uprising. They presented their petition, which denounced the Minister of War, Osman Pasha Rifki, of course a Turk, for grossly unjust treatment of the Egyptian officers, to Riaz, who was entirely ignorant of military affairs and undertook to lay their grievances before the Khedive, the titular head of the army. It was resolved to arrest the colonels, but the secret leaked out, and when, in obedience to a summons, they presented themselves at the Ministry of War, they had their regiments behind them ready to move if they did not reappear within a given time, and their regiments moved so effectively that the Khedive was advised to dismiss the Minister of War, and appoint in his stead the nominee of the mutinous troops, Mahmoud Pasha Sami.

There was another lull, but only on the surface. The officers watched the Ministers and the Ministers the officers, both sides intensely suspicious and full of secret fears. In July the soldiers invented a form of demonstration which the latter-day Nationalists have made their own. A gunner was killed in the streets of Alexandria. His comrades marched with the corpse to the Ras-el-Teen Palace, where the Khedive was staying, and, forcing their way in, bore it into his presence, adjuring him to avenge the army of which he was the chief. There were intrigues and counter-intrigues, the foreign Powers meantime staying their hands, and co-operation between the British and French representatives growing less cordial. On September 9th, an order was issued removing one of the most notoriously disaffected regiments from

Cairo to Alexandria. This was the signal for a third mutiny. Arabi, with 2,500 men and 18 guns, marched into Abdeen Square. There was a dramatic moment when the Khedive, accompanied by Sir Auckland Colvin, who had succeeded Baring the year before as Commissioner of the Debt, faced Arabi in the square and ordered him to sheathe his sword. This Arabi did, but proceeded to intimate that he was there to enforce three demands "in the name of the Egyptian people": the dismissal of the Ministry, the convocation of a Parliament, and the raising of the strength of the army to 18,000 men. This was no longer a mere military mutiny. It was a military *pronunciamiento*. The Khedive's judgment failed him at the crucial moment. Had he then ordered Arabi to withdraw his troops as he had ordered him to sheathe his sword, stating plainly that, whilst always willing to listen to the wishes of his people, he could not recognise the army as the proper channel for their expression, he might have been master of the situation. But he lacked moral rather than physical courage. He turned to Colvin, exclaiming, "You hear what he says"; and was evidently ready to parley then and there with the military chiefs. Had he done so, there would have been an end not only of his own authority but of all civil authority. Colvin saw the danger and urged him to withdraw to the Palace. Negotiations followed which were at first stormy, but ultimately led to another compromise under the steadying influence of a new factor which, to the surprise of both parties, showed itself equally determined to resist a military dictatorship and any revival of Khedivial prerogatives. This new factor was the Chamber of Notables, which met on September 13th—exactly a year before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, which would perhaps never have been fought had the Khedive known how to utilise unfamiliar forces of which he was still too inexperienced to appreciate the value. If he dreaded a mutinous soldiery, all his instincts and traditions revolted against the interference

of a popular assembly. He was too cautious to resent it openly, but the Notables could not remain unaware of his real sentiments, and they inclined more and more towards Arabi, until in the end, when he had made himself practically the dictator of Egypt, they, who had refused to bow down before the Khedive, bowed down before him without realising that they had only exchanged masters.

Another and far more mischievous factor had in the meantime appeared on the scene, namely, a Turkish mission. The insubordination of the Egyptian army, which was—and not merely in theory—part of the Ottoman army, gave the Sultan a valid excuse for fishing in troubled waters. He had even contemplated an occupation of Egypt by Turkish troops. But England and France were still sufficiently at one to dissuade him, though Lord Salisbury was inclined not to exclude altogether the idea of Turkish intervention as a last resort against anarchy. The Sultan's envoys played fast and loose with everyone. Arabi was induced both by his fear of Turkish intervention and need of popular support to divest his propaganda as far as possible of the anti-Turkish character which the mutiny of the troops had originally borne, and to give it an anti-European character with a flavour even of Mahomedan fanaticism.

Confusion became worse confounded when Gambetta was overthrown early in 1882 and succeeded by Freycinet, who was neither so convinced a believer in an Anglo-French understanding nor so ready to face responsibility for grave Egyptian complications. The Chamber of Notables began to assume a more imperious tone, and claimed the right to vote as well as to discuss the Budget, and demanded a new Organic Law conferring that right upon it should it be denied under the existing regulations. The Prime Minister, Cherif Pasha, could neither resist nor give way. So he resigned, and in the new Cabinet Arabi himself became War Minister, whilst his brother officer, Mahmoud Sami, who had hitherto held that portfolio, became Prime Minister. The fusion between the military party and the Nationalist party was complete,

for the former swallowed the latter. The Khedive and his supporters leant more and more to Turkish intervention as their one hope of salvation, and Arabi once more proceeded to take strong measures against the old Turkish element in the army. The Administration was paralysed. The foreign communities dreaded an anti-European outbreak. The British and French representatives were at last driven to take a step which had it been taken earlier might have been effective. They demanded the resignation of the Cabinet and the retirement of Arabi from Egypt and of his two chief coadjutors into the interior. The military party were for a moment frightened into submission, and the Cabinet resigned, but none ventured to take its place, and after a short interval of chaos Arabi was reinstated.

A British fleet arrived before Alexandria, but Arabi was induced by Mr. Wilfrid Blunt and other European sympathisers to believe that Gladstone would never sanction single-handed British intervention and that the French would never agree to co-operate. He was grievously misled on the former point. The Sultan, it is true, had still to be reckoned with, for, at the instance of the Powers, two High Commissioners, reported to be carrying far more definite instructions than the earlier Ottoman mission, landed at Alexandria. But Arabi had not much cause to fear them, for each had separate instructions and, after Abdul Hamid's wont, of an opposite character. A sudden outburst of fanaticism in Alexandria, where over fifty Europeans were brutally massacred on June 11th by a Mahomedan mob, precipitated the catastrophe towards which all parties had been blindly moving. The Powers made a last attempt to avert the storm by convoking a Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople, but the Sultan hesitated to take part in it. On July 11th he sent an assurance to the British Ambassador, Lord Dufferin, that on the very next day "he would be able to propose a satisfactory solution of the Egyptian question." But Sir Beauchamp Seymour was already bombarding the forts of Alexandria, in

which, in spite of the British Admiral's warning, Arabi was believed to be erecting fresh batteries. The French fleet had sailed away the day before. Italy declined our invitation to co-operate. The Sultan did not decline, but procrastinated. Very reluctantly the British Government undertook single-handed the task which none would share with England, and within two months Sir Garnet Wolseley had scattered Arabi's vaunted army at Tel-el-Kebir and the British flag floated on the citadel of Cairo. The authority of the Khedive was restored in name, and Arabi, who had surrendered to our troops, was put on trial for his life as a rebel, but ultimately spared at our instance and sent in exile to Ceylon.

I saw him several times during the last few months of his stormy dictatorship. He looked the *fellah* that he was by birth. His heavy features betrayed a strain of African blood, but he looked one straight in the face and his manners were courteous. He was very ignorant, and to some extent a tool in the hands of abler men. But I believe he was honest and well-meaning, and a patriot according to his lights. He strenuously denied having been privy to the Alexandria massacre, and his orders certainly availed to stop the disturbances there as soon as he was prevailed upon to issue them. I saw him again many years afterwards in Ceylon. He told me frankly that though he had distrusted us intensely in those troublous times, all he heard from Egypt since the British Occupation had satisfied him that we were doing great things for the *fellaheen* to whom he himself belonged, and he could not but be grateful to us for having befriended them. But he added in almost the same words which an Egyptian statesman afterwards used to me, who was for many years one of Lord Cromer's most loyal coadjutors, "there will be no assurance of peace in Egypt so long as the Turkish house of Mehemet Ali has not been turned out of the country." The young Abbas Hilmi had then just succeeded to the Khediviate, and was already justifying "Arabi the Egyptian's" warning.

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CHAPTER III

THE FICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF BRITISH CONTROL

THE British Occupation came as Mehemet Ali had long ago foreseen ; but it came, not from any set purpose of British policy, but as the inevitable resultant of forces which he had himself originally set in motion. He had galvanised Egypt into life again at the very time when its life was destined to affect more closely than for centuries before the interests of Europe in general and of Great Britain in particular. For the application of steam power to navigation was reopening the old direct trade route to India and the Far East across the Isthmus of Suez, which had been for three hundred years diverted to the longer ocean routes round the Cape, and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, which Mehemet Ali did so much to accelerate, was bringing the strategical importance of Egypt once more into relief. That was the first stage. The second stage covers the failure of Mehemet Ali's successors, and notably of his grandson, Ismail, to consolidate his work. Instead of entrenching the new Egyptian State behind the bulwarks of economic prosperity and progressive liberty, they brought it to the verge of ruin, whilst the opening of the Suez Canal was creating a fresh European and essentially British interest in the maintenance of peace and order in Egypt. Egyptian bankruptcy might never have led to the British Occupation if it had not been followed by Egyptian anarchy. Neither Lord Salisbury, who was in office

when Egypt went bankrupt, nor Mr. Gladstone, who had succeeded him when bankruptcy had led to anarchy, had the slightest desire to see Great Britain take the burden—least of all the undivided burden—of intervention on her shoulders. But none ultimately could be found to share it with her, and all, however grudgingly, admitted that she could not shirk it.

The history of the Occupation, like the history of modern Egypt before the Occupation, falls naturally into two periods. The first period, from 1882 to 1907, coincides roughly with that of Lord Cromer's long tenure of office as British representative in Cairo, armed after the first few years, in practice, with almost full powers. The second period, towards which the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904 prepared a transition, began with Lord Cromer's retirement, and we have not yet emerged from it, though the Great War and the proclamation of the British Protectorate have precipitated a crisis which must, one way or another, end it.

For there is one feature common to both periods which even the proclamation of the Protectorate has not removed, but has, indeed, of late merely accentuated, and that is the peculiarly anomalous nature of the relationship with the British Empire into which Egypt was brought by the Occupation.

When the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 was followed by the dispatch of a large expeditionary force to Egypt, and Mr. Gladstone assured Parliament that we were not engaged in war, but merely in the operations of war, he merely propounded the first of the many fictions to which his Government and every other British Government since his day has from time to time resorted in order to avoid any clear definition of the relationship in which Egypt stands to us. The British Government shrank—rightly or wrongly—from annexation in 1882, just as it shrank from it again—rightly or wrongly—during the Great War. In 1882 they certainly never realised the difficulties of the situation which "the opera-

tions of war" were going to create, and they persisted for a long time in believing that the Occupation into which they had drifted would and could be merely temporary. In accordance with that belief, they not only pledged themselves repeatedly to a speedy withdrawal, but anxiously explored every means of escape compatible with the responsibility they had assumed towards the people of Egypt by military intervention. But the longer we remained in Egypt the more the conviction forced itself slowly on their reluctant minds that withdrawal would simply mean the relapse of Egypt either into the state of chaos from which our military intervention had rescued it, or into the old system of misgovernment and oppression which had ultimately plunged it into chaos. The whole structure of government and administration had gone to pieces, and if it was ever to be restored, it had to be built up again from the very foundations. Neither in the interests of Egypt nor in our own interests was it possible to abandon the country to its fate, and if we did abandon it, there was yet another danger to be reckoned with. At the first opportunity, which would assuredly not have been slow to arise, some other Power would have stepped into the place we had vacated. There was Turkey with her suzerain rights which Abdul Hamid was always plotting to assert, though the nerve to do so effectively always failed him at the crucial moment. There was France with Russia behind her, who had not yet forgiven us for the loss of her former position in Egypt, though she had only herself to thank for her own refusal to share in the "operations of war" which had placed us in occupation of the valley of the Nile. There were, it is true, other Powers, such as Germany, whose attitude for the time being was less unfriendly and whose ambitions would not then have been served by our withdrawal from Egypt. But whereas all the Powers had actually acquiesced, however reluctantly in some cases, in the British Occupation, it was difficult to foresee what might be the consequences of

withdrawal. They might well have proved almost as dangerous to the peace of Europe as to the slight elements of stability which the Occupation was beginning to restore in Egypt itself. So the Occupation was prolonged from year to year, and the possibility of ending it became more and more remote as the work of reconstruction to which the Occupation had committed us compelled us to extend and tighten our grip on every branch of the administration. We were at least able to restore security and prosperity such as Egypt had never before known, and as all the large foreign communities established in Egypt shared exactly the same benefits as the British community, foreign Powers were less and less inclined to quarrel with us for remaining in Egypt. The rulers of Turkey, whether Old Turks or Young Turks, were never reconciled to the ascendancy of a Christian Power in a Mahomedan country over which they still claimed and exercised a not unimportant remnant of their ancient rights of sovereignty and a still less unimportant influence in virtue of a common faith. But French hostility abated with the growing menace of the Kaiser's ambitions, which drew Great Britain and France together, and the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904 finally removed the danger of all serious friction between the two Western Powers over Egypt as well as over other colonial issues which had been sometimes scarcely less acute.

British Governments had long since ceased to talk about withdrawal, but never until after the Anglo-French Agreement had they openly acknowledged that no definite term could be set to the Occupation. Not even then were its implications frankly faced. The Occupation had assumed the shape of a veiled Protectorate, but no attempt was ever made—nor has been hitherto made since the veiled Protectorate was converted into an open Protectorate in 1915—to define the actual relationship thereby established between Egypt and Great Britain. From the moment we occupied Egypt we had to assume responsibility for its governance. But we

never acknowledged and have not yet acknowledged either to the Egyptians or to the Powers, or perhaps even to ourselves, what that responsibility involves. We have been virtually the rulers of Egypt since 1882, but we have always refrained from claiming any executive authority. We have thus been driven to all sorts of convenient fictions in order to disguise the fact. Until 1915, when he was given the title of High Commissioner, the British representative in Cairo continued to rank with those of other Powers, over whom, as Agent and Consul-General, he enjoyed no official precedence other than that which seniority of appointment might happen to confer upon him. Yet he could make and unmake Egyptian Ministers, who had to follow his advice in all matters of first-rate importance or resign their offices. One after another every Egyptian Minister was given a British Adviser whose advice was also frequently, in all but name, an order, and so on throughout nearly the whole range of Egyptian government and administration, until there grew up in later years a regular Anglo-Egyptian bureaucracy with powers and responsibilities never defined but none the less real for being based on the fiction that executive authority was reserved to the Egyptians.

The Khedive Tewfik, who owed the safety of his throne and dynasty to the Occupation, accepted these fictions, and his successor, Abbas Hilmi, never openly repudiated them, though he secretly struggled against them. Egyptian Ministers could always be found to accept them, and for a long time the great majority of the Egyptian people accepted them, at first with a measure of real gratitude for the benefits they had received from the Occupation, and later on, as the memory of the old evil days before the Occupation receded, with a growing impatience of the tutelage they believed themselves to have outgrown.

To the many causes which contributed to this change in the attitude of the Egyptians towards the British

Protectorate, when it was still a veiled Protectora and after it was openly proclaimed, I shall have occasi to refer later on, as well as to the peculiar methods a agencies by which the Protectorate was exercised. Duri the first period of the Occupation our difficulties we due to quite other causes. They were due to the u certainty of our tenure both as to duration and tit For so long as the British Government were not prepar to remove that twofold uncertainty, they had to squa their own responsibilities for the governance of Egy after the Occupation with the international engagemen into which the Egyptian Government had entered befo the Occupation. That was no easy problem, especial during the first period of the Occupation, when some the Great Powers were by no means yet reconciled even the temporary ascendancy which our military occupati necessarily gave us, and the safety of Egypt even with her own frontiers was at times in serious peril. F the treaty rights of other Powers were very far-reachi and gave them a formidable handle for unfriendly int ference even in the internal affairs of Egypt, whilst t whole international situation was pregnant with t danger of foreign complications.

Only when one bears clearly in mind the manif restraints which were thus placed on our freedom action, whether by foreign treaty rights in Egypt by considerations of general policy, can the magnitu of the task which fell to Lord Cromer during the fi period of the Occupation, or the success with which accomplished it, be justly appraised.

The first danger point was the Sudan, and it m be well to recall what happened there, as it seems have entirely escaped the memory of the Egypti Nationalists, who demand our withdrawal from it well as from Egypt. One leading Nationalist told point blank that we had "robbed" Egypt of the Sud as if the Egyptians had not been driven headlong out the Sudanese themselves, who, but for us, would ha

carried fire and slaughter into Egypt itself. I think he really believed that it was Egyptian troops who alone reconquered the Sudan, and he was quite confident that Egypt, when once she had achieved "complete independence," would be not only able to retain it unaided, but justified in holding it by force, however much the Sudanese might, also in their turn, clamour for "complete independence," as they, unlike the Egyptians, are still, he unblushingly contended, quite unripe for it, and, indeed, could never be allowed to aspire to it, since Egypt must, in her own interest, always control the upper waters of the Nile.

Since Mehemet Ali conquered it, the Sudan had remained an unruly province, and even men like Samuel Baker and Gordon had only been able to counteract very intermittently the universal hatred of Egyptian rule throughout that vast region stretching from the Equator to Upper Egypt and from the Red Sea to Darfur. Whilst chaos was reigning in 1882 in Cairo, one of those strange figures that Islam from time to time throws up out of the mysterious depths of an ever latent fanaticism was sending a fiery call to salvation through the Sudan. Half prophet and half adventurer, the Mahdi had proclaimed himself invested with a divine mission to rescue the Sudan from Egyptian misrule, then to march upon Egypt and drive out the Turks, and finally to subdue the whole world to the faith of the Prophet. Encouraged doubtless by rumours of Egyptian anarchy, the people of the Sudan flocked to his victorious standards. The Egyptian garrisons were scattered and overwhelmed. The Kordofan province and El Obeid fell early in 1883, and with the annihilation of Hicks Pasha's ill-armed and ill-equipped army on November 5th it became clear to all but the most light-hearted of Egyptian Ministers that not even Khartum could be saved without military support from England. And England, unwilling to give that support, advised and even enforced the abandonment of the whole of the Sudan as the only course compatible

with the military and financial resources of Egypt. The Dervishes themselves proceeded forcibly to hasten the evacuation, but not until England, after many disastrous hesitations, had been compelled, in the course of 1884–1885, to dispatch two military expeditions into the Eastern Sudan and one up the Nile towards Khartum in vain attempts to relieve beleaguered Egyptian garrisons, and above all to save Gordon, who had undertaken the heroic but hopeless feat of effecting a peaceful evacuation. Nor did the Sudan after its evacuation cease to be a menace to Egypt and a drain upon its exchequer. For some time Upper Egypt was constantly threatened with invasion, and Dongola too had to be evacuated before the flowing tide of Dervish conquest was arrested, after the Mahdi's death in 1885, by a small Anglo-Egyptian force which held up at Ginnis the Khalifa who had succeeded him. The new frontier was withdrawn still further north to Wadi Halfa, which the Dervishes only once seriously threatened. The attack failed utterly, and the death of Wad Nejumi, killed at Toski, deprived the invaders of their ablest and bravest leader.

But Wadi Halfa remained altogether for over a decade the southern bulwark of civilisation against the devastating flood of African barbarism, and from the quarters in which, on one occasion, I spent a couple of days with Lord (then Sir Herbert) Kitchener during one of his tours of inspection as Sirdar of the Egyptian army, I could see the Dervish pickets on the not far distant hills, beyond which, for 2,000 miles, Mahdi-ism still held the whole Sudan in its murderous grip. I asked the future hero of Omdurman how long this abomination would have to be tolerated. "With luck," he replied, "not more than another seven or eight years." That was in 1890, and Omdurman was fought in 1898. The "luck" came when, in 1896, the British Government were moved by the urgent appeal of Italy, backed by the German Emperor, after the Italian disaster at Adua in Abyssinia, for an Anglo-Egyptian diversion on the Nile which should

avert the menace of a Dervish attack on the rear of the Italian position in Erythrea. The great problems of irrigation in Egypt and the scheme for the big dam at Assuan, which was then preparing, had already brought home to the British and Egyptian Governments the necessity of eventually reoccupying the Sudan in order to control the essential waters of the Blue and White Nile. But financial considerations were still delaying the final decision when they had to yield to the exigencies of international policy. Before the end of 1896 Dongola had been recovered; in 1897 the Dervish hordes had been pushed back as far as the confluence of the Nile and the Atbara, on the upper waters of which, in the Eastern Sudan, Kassala, abandoned by the Italians, had been reoccupied by a small Egyptian column.

On September 2nd, 1898, Mahdi-ism received its death-blow on the stricken field of Omdurman, and the British and Egyptian flags were hoisted side by side on the ruins of the old palace, near the spot where Gordon was known to have died a hero's death nearly fourteen years before. The Khalifa, however, escaped, and more than a year elapsed before he and the remnants of his followers were brought to bay by Sir Reginald Wingate. He died fighting together with his principal Emirs and many of his followers. The rest surrendered. It was the end of Mahdi-ism, which in sixteen years had reduced the population of the Sudan from over eight to under two millions, and wiped most of the large towns and thousands of villages out of existence. From start to finish the expedition had been brilliantly conducted, and to have created a new Egyptian army that, even when stiffened by a large British force, could meet and stand up to the fierce Dervish warriors before whom the Egyptians had so often fled in the past was in itself no mean feat. But the actual fighting represented only one aspect of the difficult task involved in the reconquest of the Sudan. Though the expedition together with the laborious construction of hundreds of miles of railway

across the desert was conducted with extraordinary economy, it imposed financial sacrifices upon the Egyptian Treasury which it could still barely afford. On one occasion the British Government had to come to the rescue, for, under cover of the rigid control which foreign Powers were still able to exercise over Egyptian expenditure, France and Russia, out of sheer opposition to Great Britain, instructed their representatives on the Commission of the Egyptian Debt to enter a suit in the Mixed Tribunals—and won it—restraining the Egyptian Government from devoting certain financial reserves to the purposes of the Sudan expedition. Infinitely more dangerous to Anglo-French relations was the famous Marchand expedition, which crossed the African Continent from the Niger and hoisted the French flag at Fashoda on the White Nile, at the very moment when the victorious Anglo-Egyptian forces, having reached Khartum, were working their way up the river from the north. But for the wisdom of the British and French Governments and the personal tact displayed by Kitchener in dealing with Colonel Marchand and in inducing him to withdraw from an untenable position, the reconquest of the Sudan might have ended in a disastrous conflict between England and France.

For more than twenty years now we have been slowly but steadily reclaiming the Sudan to a prosperity it had never yet known. If Egyptian Nationalism resents the British flag waving beside the Egyptian flag over Khartum, it would do well to remember that, were our flag to disappear, that of Egypt would go with it, for even the Mahdi's reign of terror has not weakened the hatred and contempt in which the Sudanese hold the Egyptians.

Our position in Egypt was from the first day of the Occupation beset with so many international pitfalls that Lord Salisbury, as soon as he returned to power in 1885, made a very determined attempt to obtain relief from the Sudan trouble and to get out of Egypt

altogether by means of a direct agreement with the Sultan. Egyptian Nationalists are fond of talking of the independence which Egypt enjoyed before the Occupation. But they conveniently forget the fact that the Sultan still possessed certain very definite rights in Egypt which had never been challenged. On the contrary, the Powers had themselves induced him to exercise them effectively, when he issued the Firman deposing the Khedive Ismail, in 1879, and they had sought, less successfully, to induce him to exercise them again during the prolonged crisis that preceded the Occupation. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, an adroit if eccentric diplomatist, who enjoyed in a singular degree Lord Salisbury's favour and confidence, was sent out in 1885 as High Commissioner to negotiate, in concert with a High Commissioner appointed by the Porte, the basis of an agreement which was originally intended to secure the military co-operation of Turkey in the Sudan, and, when that failed, was at any rate to lay down a scheme of reforms to be carried out under Anglo-Turkish auspices in Egypt, and to provide for the withdrawal of the British Occupation within a term of years, subject in certain circumstances to an eventual Anglo-Turkish reoccupation. The many vicissitudes of that diplomatic adventure need not be recalled, but, if only to measure the distance that we have travelled since then, it may be worth while to reproduce one passage from the instructions issued by Lord Salisbury to his special envoy.

"It is the wish of Her Majesty's Government to recognise in its full significance the position which is secured to His Majesty the Sultan as Sovereign of Egypt by Treaties and other instruments having a force under international law. They are of opinion that the authority of the Sultan over a large portion of the Muhammadan world which exists under his rule will be much assured by a due recognition of his legitimate position in respect to Egypt."

The joint efforts of the two High Commissioners during a prolonged stay in Cairo failed, however, to produce

any scheme which was likely to improve upon th work on which Sir Evelyn Baring and his small b British fellow-workers were already engaged. theless, Lord Salisbury, who had not yet realise he was backing the wrong horse, sent him on to Co tinople, and after much haggling a Convention actually signed, on May 22nd, 1887, between Drun Wolff and the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affa the defence and reorganisation of Egypt and the drawal within three years of the British Army of O tion. The Ottoman Government was to be free ther to "use its right to occupy Egypt militarily" in c more or less clearly defined emergencies, in whicl Great Britain "might" also send troops to co-operat the Ottoman forces. To this British right of re France and Russia took very strong exception they prevailed on the Sultan not to ratify the vention.

Neither England nor Egypt had any reason to this diplomatic rebuff. But Turkey—very fortunat lost her one great chance. The Sultan still reta however, his suzerain rights, and however much the been curtailed under Mehemet Ali and his succe they could still be used to embarrass both Egyp Great Britain, as they were, for instance, in 1892, the Sultan tried hard to import new conditions int Firman confirming Abbas Hilmi's succession to Khediviate on the death of his father, Tewfik. Porte, moreover, could also always exploit Egy frontier questions, which, in 1906, suddenly ass serious proportions, when Turkish encroachments to Akaba and in other parts of the Sinai Peninsula were stopped by the dispatch of the British fleet into Eastern Mediterranean, and the delivery of a very Note, amounting almost to an ultimatum, by the B Ambassador at Constantinople, who intimated "His Majesty's Government had no intention of ma the suzerainty of the Sultan over Egypt incompa

with the British position in that country, but that it depended upon His Imperial Majesty whether it became so." Last, but not least, we had constantly to reckon with the underground influence which the Sultan as Khalif could, and sometimes unquestionably endeavoured to, exercise to our detriment over a Mahomedan population which, great as was its hatred of the Turks as a ruling race in Egypt, recognised the Sultan as the spiritual head of Islam.

French antagonism was more subtle and therefore still more difficult to deal with. Nothing perhaps illustrated it more forcibly than the attitude of France towards the Drummond Wolff mission when the French Government preferred to defeat an agreement binding us to evacuate within three years rather than to tolerate the reservation of our eventual right of re-entry. That France had herself broken away from the policy of Anglo-French co-operation in Egypt by withdrawing her fleet from Alexandria on the very eve of the bombardment in 1882 made it none the less galling for her to see herself ousted from the pre-eminent position she had long enjoyed in a country where, apart from her political and material interests, her language had been for half a century the chief vehicle of European culture. It was a period of acute colonial rivalry all over the world, and Egypt was only one of the many points—but with the French the sorest point—where England seemed to them to have scored heavily at their expense. If France could not compel our withdrawal, she could put many awkward spokes in our wheels, and whilst the Triple Alliance was quite content to see Anglo-French antagonism intensified by the Occupation, neither Germany, nor Austria-Hungary, nor Italy, nor other smaller Powers were averse from helping France to maintain the many restraints upon Egypt by which they believed their own interests to be equally benefited.

Some of those restraints arose out of the international arrangements described in the last chapter for liquidating

the desperate financial situation which the Khedive Ismail had bequeathed to Egypt. Immediately after the Occupation, the British Government had intimated to France that the arrangement under which, in 1876, Egyptian financial control had been primarily vested in two joint controllers, one English and one French, must cease, and that there would no longer be room for a French controller in Cairo. France had acquiesced, but she still remained firmly entrenched in the International Commission of the Public Debt, commonly known as the *Caisse*, which derived considerable powers of control from the famous Law of Liquidation. In view of the heavy expenses—including a sum of £4,000,000 for compensation for the destruction by Arabi's troops of a large part of Alexandria—into which Egypt had been plunged since the Law of Liquidation, that enactment stood admittedly in need of drastic revision if the Egyptian Government was ever to be placed financially on its feet again. A Conference of the Powers which assembled in London in 1884, on Lord Granville's invitation, failed, mainly through French obstruction, to arrive at any settlement. A one-sided attempt to set aside the Law of Liquidation had to be dropped ignominiously when the French representative on the *Caisse* and his Italian and Austrian colleagues appealed to the Mixed Tribunals. Only in 1885 was a *modus vivendi* reached, considerably modifying the Law in favour of the Egyptian Treasury with the assent of the Powers, including now also Germany and Russia as well as Turkey, and Egypt was allowed to raise a loan under their collective guarantee for certain specific purposes, including the Alexandria indemnity, for which foreigners of all nationalities were waiting impatiently. This *modus vivendi* gave Egypt breathing time and a little more latitude as to the limit and nature of expenditure allowed by the international guardians of her financial conscience, but it still tied up any surplus revenue in such a way as to arm the *Caisse* very frequently with a practical right of veto, even in

matters of internal administrative policy involving increased expenditure. Moreover, the term of grace accorded for a temporary reduction of interest on the Debt was to expire within two years. Failure to balance revenue and expenditure would have meant at its expiry a fresh avowal of bankruptcy and relapse into unmitigated internationalism. The next two years were a race against bankruptcy, won by a very short head, against French expectations and hopes. But even then the reduced opportunities of the *Caisse* to obstruct Anglo-Egyptian policy were sufficient for frequent pin-pricks, though they became less effective with the revival of Egyptian prosperity, until the desire to inflict them passed away gradually with a new orientation of French policy in Europe and the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904 at last removed all excuses for friction.

But there were other restrictions of a more permanent character placed by international treaties on Egypt's freedom of action. All the Great Powers, including Great Britain, and a number of smaller ones, making altogether fifteen before the Great War, possessed and still possess extraordinary privileges conferred by treaty on their subjects resident in Egypt. These privileges, known as the Capitulations, are derived from charters of immunity granted in ancient times by the Ottoman Sultans to the subjects of Christian Powers established in or trading with their dominions, in which Egypt was included. The nature and extent of these privileges deserve to be examined somewhat closely, as the Capitulations have endured to the present day, and the question of their abolition or modification has become one of very great urgency. As the Christian Powers waxed stronger and the Ottoman Empire waned, the privileges grew into rights, and nowhere has the use and abuse of them gone to greater lengths than in Egypt. Originally intended to safeguard the collective interests of the foreign communities against the arbitrary power of Oriental despots, and the life and property of the

individual foreigner against the violence of their myrmidons and the venality of their judges, they have been turned into very effective weapons in the hands of foreign Governments to hamper Egyptian legislation, even when its reasonableness cannot in principle be denied, whilst the less reputable members of the foreign communities have sought shelter behind them for dubious and often criminal practices which would otherwise have brought them within the reach of the Egyptian police.

The most serious restraints to which Egypt is subjected by the Capitulations are the following :—

First, no direct tax can be imposed on foreigners resident in Egypt without the consent of all the Capitulation Powers.

Secondly, all civil and commercial cases and all cases relating to land between foreigners and Egyptians, or between foreigners of the same or different nationalities, are tried by the Mixed Courts, which consist largely of foreign judges.

Thirdly, all criminal charges against foreigners, with a few exceptions which come within the jurisdiction of the Mixed Tribunals, are tried in the Consular Court of the defendant's own nationality.

Fourthly, no domiciliary visit can take place in the premises of a foreigner without the previous consent of his own Consular authority, and the Egyptian police cannot without such authority enter any foreigner's house, except in case of fire or of an unmistakable cry for help against violence.

Now what do these restraints mean in practice? The first one means that whatever may be the needs of the Egyptian Treasury there cannot be any great broadening of the basis of taxation so long as a number of Powers have the right to veto the enforcement of any new direct taxes upon the foreign communities resident in Egypt, who not only form a very important and wealthy fraction of the population, but handle almost the whole of the

external and a considerable part of the internal trade of the country.

The only important sources of revenue which the Capitulations cannot affect are the land tax, Customs and Excise, to which the duty on imported tobacco contributes about one-third, and judicial and registration fees. The readjustment of the land tax, begun in 1899, was based on a settlement to last for thirty years, which precludes any increase till the expiry of that term, except possibly by way of super-tax on large holdings. The elastic sources of revenue derived in other countries from income tax, succession duties, duties on commercial transactions, etc., are closed against the Egyptian Treasury, because so long as the Capitulations are in force no new imposts of that nature can be levied upon foreigners without the consent of all the foreign Capitulation Powers, and as the Egyptian Government cannot be expected to differentiate against its own subjects by making them liable to heavy taxation from which the large foreign communities remain exempt, it has to forgo important sources of revenue that are, so to say, staring it in the face.

Experience has shown how hopeless it is to obtain such unanimous consent in matters of first-rate importance, and even in small matters it involves almost interminable negotiations. A few years ago, when an improved system of drainage was introduced into Cairo and it was proposed to levy a small tax on all house-owners who benefited by it, the Portuguese Government, with barely a dozen Portuguese house-owners in Cairo, held up for six months an agreement arrived at for the purpose with all the other Powers, and only gave its consent in return for a promise from the British Government to settle in favour of Portugal some quite irrelevant colonial question in South Africa.

The second restraint placed upon Egypt under the Capitulations means the maintenance of tribunals which do not derive their authority from the Egyptian State,

but from foreign Powers. For it is they who designate the majority of the judges of the Mixed Tribunals, whose formal appointment alone has been left as a mere matter of courtesy to the ruler of Egypt, and these judges are themselves foreigners and considerably outnumber their Egyptian colleagues. In many ways the creation of the Mixed Tribunals, which was the result of Nubar Pasha's far-sighted statesmanship some years before the Occupation, has been of the greatest benefit to Egypt. It at once curtailed some of the extravagant rights hitherto enjoyed by foreigners under the Capitulations by bringing the bulk of civil cases between foreigners and Egyptians, as well as between foreigners themselves, within one single jurisdiction, instead of leaving them, as formerly was the case, to the mercy of a number of Consular Courts of varying competence and integrity, and it established at the same time a strong and unified judicature which in spite of occasional scandals has on the whole set up a higher standard of equity and of honesty than Egypt had ever before known. Egyptians themselves have constantly recognised this by agreeing to submit their own civil cases to the Mixed Tribunals rather than to the Native Courts. Nevertheless, and for that very reason, foreign influence is unquestionably more strongly entrenched than ever in these tribunals, which have already shown at times how effectively their authority can be invoked for political purposes against the Egyptian Executive, very few Continental judges being trained in traditions of judicial independence that would enable them to resist the pressure of their own Governments. Interference of this kind, however, became far less frequent when international friction diminished during the later period of the Occupation, and may be expected to disappear altogether if once politically stable conditions are established in Egypt, whilst foreign jurisdiction cannot possibly be eliminated, though many practical reforms are admittedly desirable, so long as the Egyptian educated classes hold almost

entirely aloof from the commercial, financial, and industrial business of the country, out of which most of the cases arise that come before the Mixed Tribunals.

In regard to the third point, reserving the trial of all criminal charges against foreigners to the Consular Court of the defendant's own nationality, Egypt cannot expect foreign Powers to surrender that privilege until the Native Courts have been raised to a far higher standard of efficiency and to a far higher conception of justice. But the Powers themselves must realise the drawbacks and sometimes the scandals that arise out of the inconsistencies in the administration of criminal law by a number of different Consular Courts following different procedures and having not only different rules of evidence, but different ideas of equity and impartiality. The remedy for the present would seem to lie in the extension to criminal cases of some such jurisdiction as the Mixed Tribunals possess in civil cases.

The fourth restraint imposed upon Egypt by the Capitulations is far more serious, for it operates mainly nowadays for the protection of the foreign evildoer. When the Ottoman Empire was a formidable Power and the foreigner was only admitted on sufferance because the Turk, incapable of creating a commercial organisation of his own, was fain to recognise his usefulness as a trader, it was no mean achievement for the Christian Powers to have obtained by treaty for their subjects personal immunity from arbitrary arrest and the security of their homes and warehouses from molestation, save with the express sanction of their Consular authorities and in the presence of a Consular official. Nor did the Turk himself consider provisions of this nature unreasonable or inconvenient at a time when he had to deal with small foreign communities, living only in a few seaports and all confined within one particular quarter of the town. In Egypt to-day there are foreign subjects numbering scores of thousands, some of them scattered all over the country, and each of these large

foreign communities includes a considerable number of natives, who have been allowed by methods which, at any rate in the past, would not always stand inquiry to acquire the same rights of protection as those enjoyed by residents of undoubted foreign extraction. Amongst them are to be found some of the most undesirable elements of the Levant, who chiefly use the privileges conferred by the Capitulations to defeat the law of the land and often to escape the penalties which, in any other country, would speedily overtake their nefarious practices. Nor is that all. They lend their names to Egyptian subjects of the same kidney, with whom they enter into clandestine and collusive partnerships. Every illicit trade can thus be carried on with relative impunity not only by foreign but also by Egyptian subjects under cover of the Capitulations. By the time the Egyptian authorities have fulfilled the necessary formalities to enable them to enter the premises of a receiver of stolen goods, of a petty tradesman using false weights and measures, of a keeper of a gambling hell or a house of ill-fame, or of a dealer in forbidden drugs, he will in nine cases out of ten have got wind of what is coming through some of the many channels of information always available in an Oriental country, where notoriously nothing is ever kept secret, and when the Egyptian police arrive with the Consular official in attendance, the premises have been swept and garnished and every trace of offence carefully cleared away. Even when the law can be and is at last enforced, it is generally only after incredible delays, and then it is probably not the real offender but some man of straw who is at last brought to book. There have been cases in which the ownership of premises used for illicit purposes has been found to be vested jointly or successively in foreigners of four different nationalities. Lord Cromer's annual reports and those of his successors teem with instances that illustrate the resourcefulness of the law-breakers in exploiting the benefits of the Capitulations and the

futility of merely Egyptian legislation so long as the Capitulations stand in the way of the application of new laws to foreigners as well as to Egyptians. Whatever may still be the defects of the Egyptian police and of the Egyptian Administration, there has long since ceased to be any excuse for such a scandalous state of affairs. But whilst this is more or less reluctantly admitted by most of the Powers, they, or some of them at least, have persisted hitherto in regarding it as a lesser evil than the surrender of any part of the Ark of the Covenant in which the Capitulations are enshrined.

It is surely unnecessary to labour any further the point whether, before the Occupation, Egypt, even though nominally autonomous, really enjoyed in any sense that can properly be attached to the word the national independence of which we are supposed to have robbed her. When Lord Cromer first took charge of the conduct of Egyptian affairs, Egypt had to reckon with the suzerain rights of the Ottoman Sultan, which, however circumscribed, afforded him frequent opportunities of mischievous interference; with the international restraints placed upon her power to raise and spend revenue pending the liquidation of her foreign debt; and with the whole system of servitudes imposed upon her by the Capitulations. All these things must be borne in mind in measuring the work he was able to perform. As we shall see, he successfully parried the worst attempts of the Sultan to revive the political ascendancy of Turkey, and he released the Egyptian Treasury from the grip of the foreign bondholders; but the burden of the Capitulations was one which he was not in a position to lighten, as they cannot be touched without the consent of all the Powers concerned, and it was only after the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904 that he was able even to suggest to the British Government the possibility of framing a scheme for their revision which under British auspices might overcome foreign opposition to any change. The Capitulations remained and still remain what they were

before the Occupation, and so long as a country, unless it is prepared to differentiate against itself, is debarred in a great measure by foreign treaties from making new laws which its own interests clearly demand, and even from enforcing upon foreign residents laws that are already in existence, and of which nobody denies in principle the reasonableness and propriety, it is preposterous to talk of any independence to which mere formal recognition would lend reality.

That is the price which, we may admit, Egypt has had to pay for the fictions that have continued to underlie the reality of our controlling influence, but the price had to be paid in accordance with previous obligations into which Egypt had entered before the Occupation. Our critics, and most of all our Egyptian critics, should remember this when they seek to depreciate the great work done by England in Egypt, and more especially during the first period of the Occupation.

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CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE OCCUPATION

THE Nationalist movement of 1882 was born of a merely military mutiny, and so little was there ever of any deep national feeling behind it that it collapsed like a pricked bubble as soon as the Egyptian army, which under the impulse of a handful of leaders had supplied the one driving power, broke at Tel-el-Kebir almost before the sun had risen, and was scattered to the winds before sunset. A few battalions made a short stand when their trenches were first rushed in the dark, but neither Arabi himself nor his army put up the slightest resistance when daylight disclosed the full force of the British attack. Arabi surrendered and his troops simply melted away, a mere mob of officers and men tumbling over each other to cast off their uniforms and escape across country to the safe shelter of their own homes. Not a shot was again fired. The only other important Egyptian force, at Kafr Dawar outside Alexandria, made its submission quite cheerfully the same afternoon, just about the same time as the British cavalry reached Cairo. The Occupation became at once a military promenade, not a military operation.

I do not remember to have seen at the time so much as an angry face amongst the Egyptian people. Even the Nationalists, who most keenly resented our presence, turned almost at once to us for protection from the wrath of the rulers against whom they had rebelled. Arabi

and many others owed their lives to us. The people, exhausted by the long years of oppression which had driven them to welcome any form of revolt, returned patiently to their daily toil, and quickly learnt to look to us for the deliverance they were helpless to achieve for themselves. The chief difficulties which British control encountered during the first two decades of the Occupation arose out of the more or less covert opposition of the old ruling classes to reforms which threatened their ill-gotten privileges, or, as has been shown in the previous chapter, out of the international situation and the opportunities that foreign Powers still possessed for constant interference in the internal affairs of Egypt.

If those difficulties merely hampered but never arrested the great work of reconstruction carried out with almost unfailing success during that period, the credit belongs in the first place to the genius and unconquerable patience of Lord Cromer, and to the ability and devotion of the small band of British fellow-workers who served him with equal industry and loyalty. It is sometimes assumed that from the moment he was sent to Cairo, towards the end of 1883, as Agent and Consul-General, the British Government gave him the free hand which he afterwards unquestionably had. That is not so. Not only had he not created the situation with which he had to deal, but, so far as the British Government had any policy, it had been inspired before he ever reached Egypt by Lord Dufferin, who was dispatched from Cairo to Constantinople within the first two months of the Occupation, in the hope that his resourceful brain would provide British Ministers with a scheme for shaping the future of a country of which they had so reluctantly been driven to take charge. Lord Dufferin did evolve a scheme which he embodied in one of the most brilliant and adroit despatches in the annals of British diplomacy. It served its purpose for the moment, and though some of his recommendations were sufficiently practical to serve as a basis for subsequent reforms, he left it to

others to deal with many of the hard facts which he was too clear-sighted to ignore, but too tactful not to disguise under auspicious generalisations. It fell to Lord Cromer to dispel slowly but steadily the illusions which were still prompting the British Government to shower promises of speedy evacuation on an incredulous world, not by attempting to dictate any policy to them, but by bringing them constantly into contact with those hard facts. He had been long enough in Egypt in the last years of Ismail to see that there was only one policy possible if we were to discharge the responsibilities we had assumed towards the people of Egypt by our armed intervention in their affairs—a slow and laborious policy of reconstruction which might in the fulness of time allow us to withdraw honourably, but in which most haste would certainly prove worst speed. He relied on the hard facts themselves rather than on any arguments of his own to bring conviction home to the minds of British Ministers, and he bore meanwhile patiently with all their vacillations, though they often handicapped him heavily. No British representative can ever have been placed in a more unpleasant and even humiliating position by his own Government than Lord Cromer was during the two years, 1885–1887, when Sir Henry Drummond Wolff was hovering between Cairo, Constantinople, and London on a mission of which he profoundly distrusted the methods and the object. A lesser man might have rebelled against it, but he went plodding away unperturbed at the task he had set before himself. Little by little the British Government came to realise the soundness of his judgment and the value of his work. The egregious failure of the Drummond Wolff mission opened Lord Salisbury's eyes, and he and his successors learnt to trust Lord Cromer more and more implicitly, until, for nearly twenty years, up to the time of his retirement, his word almost became law with them. They had recognised with him that the only policy for England to pursue for a long time to

come in regard to Egypt was a policy of efficient and honest administration.

I shall only review briefly the most important achievements that must be placed to its credit, for the subject has been already far more authoritatively dealt with by those who actually helped to accomplish them, by Lord Milner in his "England in Egypt," by Sir Auckland Colvin in "The Making of Modern Egypt," and, last but not least, by Lord Cromer himself in the two volumes in which, shortly after his retirement, he supplemented the masterly Reports issued by him from year to year whilst he was in Cairo with a fuller and more intimate account of his stewardship, under the title of "Modern Egypt."

Lord Cromer was nothing if not thorough. His knowledge of Egypt in Ismail's days saved him from any illusions. He would have to build everything up from the very foundations if he was to save Egypt from the worst penalties of bankruptcy; the only foundations on which he believed it possible to build were those of sound finance, severe retrenchment wherever useless or extravagant expenditure could be cut down, and, on the other hand, no stinting, even if it meant fresh borrowing, where production could be stimulated and the people encouraged to take heart and put forth fresh energy. He had little faith in the so-called ruling classes of Egypt, but he had great faith in the industry of the masses, and it was their interests and their good will which he applied himself from first to last to cultivate. His experience as Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council in India, where he had come in for some very lean years, stood him in excellent stead. In Sir Edgar Vincent, who succeeded to Sir Auckland Colvin as Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government, he had a brilliant helper, but he was himself such a master of finance that so long as he was in Cairo it did not very much matter who was the Financial Adviser. His first Budgets were marvels of accurate adjustment.

In the crucial one of 1886–1887, when the jealous eyes of other Powers were looking with confident expectation for the deficit which would have thrown the door wide open for foreign interference, only temporarily held in abeyance by the London Convention of 1885, the situation was only saved by a surplus of a little over £20,000, after insolvency had twice seemed almost inevitable. That very awkward corner once turned, Egyptian finance got into smoother waters, though it still remained subject to the cumbersome but very effective system of jealous checks and counter-checks which the foreign members of the *Caisse* continued to enforce under the provisions of the London Convention, even after the necessity for them had passed away so long as Lord Cromer kept his trained and vigilant eye upon expenditure.

The risk could now be taken of proceeding to the abolition of the *corvée*—a reform in some respects more sensational and revolutionary than any other for which the *fellaheen* were to be indebted to British control, even if Arabi must in fairness be credited with the original idea, which might or might not have matured had he had more time. A stop had indeed been put from the beginning of the Occupation to the worst abuses of the *corvée* in the days of Ismail, when the *fellaheen* were marched off in gangs, often to great distances, to do forced labour on the Khedivial estates, or for any other purpose that the Khedive wanted. But until money could be found to pay for contract labour and dredging, the *corvée* had to be maintained for the indispensable task of maintaining the protecting earthworks at high Nile and of clearing silt from the canals at low Nile. It was estimated in 1884 that the number of men engaged on the latter class of work alone was equivalent to an army of nearly 100,000 men working for 130 days a year. They were recruited under a system which left almost inevitable loopholes for favouritism and extortion. An inquiry in one district showed that the owners of 53,000 acres

out of 145,000 cultivated and revenue-paying acres supplied the whole of the *corvée*. The State Domains paid redemption money for half their tenants, the larger proprietors got off scot-free, and the poorer *fellaheen* had to supply double the number of hands working twice the time lawfully required of them. The men on *corvée* received no payment; they had to provide their own food; they slept on the bare ground without any shelter; their own land had often to remain uncared for whilst they were absent. It was from the merely economic point of view a very wasteful system. Experiments were made on a small scale for replacing it by contract work, and when these were successful, application was made to the Powers to facilitate the financial arrangements necessary for a more sweeping reform. It took three years to obtain their consent, but an unexpected expansion of revenue made it possible to abolish the iniquitous old system finally and completely by the end of 1889.

The abolition of the *corvée* furthered, instead of hampering, as some interested objectors had prophesied, the progress of irrigation, and it was irrigation that was steadily to change the face of Egypt from the abject misery of pre-occupation days to the abounding prosperity of the present time. For without coal or other minerals, at least in any appreciable quantity, Egypt has only one great source of natural wealth, the prodigious fertility of the soil when supplied with water, and in a rainless climate the water can only be supplied by irrigation from the life-giving Nile. The rest of Egypt is desert. Irrigation was, of course, no new thing in Egypt, which had once been the granary of Rome. Its importance had not escaped Mehemet Ali, and the French engineers brought over by him designed great things which they were only allowed to carry out imperfectly. Like everything else, irrigation had suffered grievously under Ismail. Fortunately, the Public Works Department was promptly rescued not only from in-

digenous mismanagement and corruption, but also from the blighting influence of internationalism. Too many cooks spoil the broth, and never more surely than when they are of different and rival nationalities. India, the great school of modern irrigation, was at once called in aid, and she sent of her very best, Scott-Moncrieff, Garstin, Willcocks, Ross, Western, and others, all men of highest scientific attainments, and hard-workers who never spared themselves. By one of them, Sir William Willcocks, whose name will always remain conspicuously associated with the great Assuan dam, the fascinating story of Egyptian irrigation has been written in two big volumes. The old system in the Delta, where drainage and irrigation canals had come to be disastrously mixed up, was first of all restored to usefulness, and improved methods were introduced for clearing away the accumulation of silt after the annual season of fertilising floods. Perennial irrigation, of which Mehemet Ali had recognised the necessity for the cultivation of cotton and sugar, the most valuable of Egyptian crops, was rapidly developed and now covers the whole of the Delta and some districts of Upper Egypt, in substitution for the more primitive system of basin irrigation which is only possible in flood time. It is perennial irrigation that enables Egypt to have a summer as well as a winter crop by securing a constant supply of carefully meted out water even when the Nile is low, instead of the short inrush limited to the season when it is in flood. Perennial irrigation, however, requires much deeper canals, and it soon became evident that it could not achieve complete success unless some of the vast volume of water that flowed down and was wasted in the sea during the flood season could be held up and stored for distribution during the low Nile season. Mehemet Ali's French engineers had been quite aware of this, and the great Barrage on the Nile just below Cairo, though too faultily constructed to serve anything like the full purpose for which it had been designed, still stood as a sign-post

for their British successors. In the face of derisive scepticism, the Barrage was patched up experimentally and then completed in 1890, with immediate results of almost incalculable value, besides the earnest of success for still greater schemes of the same character in the future. It was in some respects a greater feat than any other, for, to borrow Scott-Moncrieff's very apt comparison, it was like "mending a watch without stopping the works." The whole stream could never be shut off at one and the same time, and the work had to be carried on during the very short working seasons alternately on one and then on the other part of the barrage. Many other, only less important, works followed in due course, such as the Assiut and Zifta barrages, which, like the Cairo barrage, do not actually store water, but raise the water levels sufficiently to feed the great canals dependent upon them. The time had then come for the crowning enterprise of the great Assuan dam, which actually stores up an immense head of water in a huge reservoir stretching many miles up-stream. Completed in 1902, it has not only provided for the old cultivable area of the Nile valley for a thousand miles downwards to the Mediterranean an almost certain insurance against the hazards of abnormally high or low Niles, but has also enabled the area to be very largely extended. Nor did the creation of the Assuan reservoir bring the story of Egyptian irrigation to a close, though it may be regarded as closing its first and perhaps most pregnant chapter. The cost of the chief works ran into many millions. But never were millions more usefully expended, and the inception of it all can be traced back to the prescience which induced Lord Cromer to apply to the development of irrigation the small free balance of £1,000,000 left to the Egyptian Government out of the £9,000,000 loan sanctioned by the London Convention of 1885. A million sounds a very small sum nowadays, but at the time it was Egypt's one little nest-egg.

No greater boon was ever conferred upon the people of Egypt. But in order that the full benefit should reach the *fellaheen* it was essential to see that they should not again be defrauded as in the past of their rightful share of water by powerful neighbours or corrupt officials, and that unfair taxation and extortionate tax-gatherers should not rob them of the proceeds of the richer harvests which irrigation was to give them. One simple and effective step was the issue by the Finance Ministry of warrants recording the exact amount of land tax each peasant had to pay. That amount once paid, he soon learnt to defy all attempts to extort more from him. A measure requiring much more time and labour was the readjustment of the land tax all over Egypt. Already the financial situation had so far improved that between 1890 and 1894 some small reductions of the land tax could be granted in the southern districts of Upper Egypt, which had hitherto derived less benefit from the new irrigation works. But the land tax was the chief source of revenue and the State could not afford any wholesale reduction all over the country. Nor was the land tax in the aggregate an excessive impost, if equitably levied. The last settlement, however, had taken place in 1864, and even if it had then been equitable —which is a very large assumption—conditions had changed so much within thirty years that the incidence of the land tax had become in many places grossly unfair, and especially, as was to be expected, to the smaller folk. A careful valuation of all lands was therefore undertaken in which the various conditions affecting each were taken into account, and whilst the aggregate of taxation remained the same, the incidence was so readjusted as to remove the most glaring inequalities. It took about ten years to complete the work, which was begun in 1896, under the direction of Sir William Willcocks, and entrusted to ten commissions, on each of which the British official in charge had an Egyptian closely associated with him. In all 3,385 villages and

about 1,100,000 landowners were dealt with. The number of appeals diminished steadily and about two-thirds were dismissed. No other measure brought home more directly to the *fellaheen* the desire of the British control to do even-handed justice to poor and rich alike. It served also, like the irrigation works, to bring the *fellaheen* into constant and close contact with the British officials, who in turn gained an intimate acquaintance with the country, as they had generally to camp near to their work and all day long they moved about among the people in their fields and villages.

These were the measures and the methods and the men that, with Lord Cromer's driving power behind them, produced not only prosperity but confidence in the beneficent Power whose presence in Egypt had transformed the face of the country. The days of the Oppression were still fresh in the *fellaheen's* memory and the sense of relief was paramount. With the reorganisation of the army begun by Sir Evelyn Wood, military service, though it never became popular with the Egyptians, was robbed of its old terrors. Conscripts too poor to bribe the authorities were no longer marched off handcuffed and in chains like hunted criminals. People came to know that the rules which now governed both conscription and exemption were enforced with fairness to all under the supervision of British officers, who insisted on discipline and obedience, but not on *bakshish*, and treated their men as human beings and not as slaves. When in Kitchener's hands the Egyptian army had been converted into a well-equipped and efficient force, and had shown itself capable of playing a creditable part in the reconquest of the Sudan, Egyptian mothers ceased even to regard the Sudan any longer as the certain grave of every Egyptian soldier that was sent in former times to serve and, more often than not, to die there.

That in other directions progress was slower and more doubtful did not directly affect the welfare and the contentment of the masses. They heartily disliked

sanitation, which seemed wantonly to disturb familiar habits, whereas their congenital fatalism was ready to accept all the consequences of grossly insanitary conditions as the will of an inexorable Providence. Nevertheless, the violent outbreak of cholera which occurred the year after the Occupation, and the appearance of bubonic plague imported from India, forbade inaction, and Sir John Rogers, and, after him, Sir Horace Pinching, had the tact and good sense not merely to impose obnoxious if necessary regulations, but also to try to instil into the village barber, who has from time immemorial fulfilled the functions of doctor and medical officer, the rudiments of sanitary laws. Hospitals, especially eye-hospitals, in a country devastated by ophthalmic diseases, afforded, moreover, object lessons of which the most ignorant could not dispute the value. In the last of his annual Reports Lord Cromer stated that in 1906 31,000 in-patients and 128,000 out-patients had been treated in Government hospitals, which had been established by that time in the chief provincial towns, besides such complete novelties as a foundling hospital and a lunatic asylum.

In some departments the fear of stimulating international jealousies which were liable to react very quickly on the political situation was not unnaturally always present to Lord Cromer's mind. For instance, the judicial system we found in Egypt was based on the Continental model, which differs from our own almost as widely in spirit as in procedure ; and the large areas of jurisdiction reserved for the Consular Courts, and for the Mixed Tribunals, hampered the British reformer in one direction quite as much as in another, the no less important field of jurisprudence and jurisdiction, covering all questions of personal status, marriage, divorce, guardianship, succession, etc., which in a Mahomedan country must be left to Mahomedan courts, alone competent to administer the canonical laws of Islam. There were many who pressed Lord Cromer to make, at least in the native

courts, where Egypt was not fettered by actual treaty engagements, a clean sweep of a system founded on French substantive law and procedure, and some early and rather injudicious attempts, of which Lord Cromer himself misdoubted the wisdom, were made to introduce Englishmen into the Ministry of Justice, and to strengthen the European element in the native courts by appointing a larger proportion of foreign judges—measures which two Prime Ministers so widely different as Nubar and Riaz successively resisted. But no new departure of abiding importance was made until Lord Cromer had satisfied himself that the time had arrived, not for any revolutionary changes, but for a careful inquiry into the existing system with a view to the removal of the more glaring evils. Sir John Scott was brought in 1890 from the High Courts of Bombay to be the first Judicial Adviser to the Egyptian Government. A better choice could hardly have been made, for he was cautious and tactful, and his recent Indian experience, together with an earlier knowledge of Egyptian conditions, had taught him how far it is possible to harmonise Western and Eastern conceptions of justice. He and his successor, Sir Malcolm MacIlwraith, confined themselves to practical though not unimportant measures of reform, intended to simplify procedure and to diminish the interminable delays of the law. In order to do something for the improvement of the Mehkemeh Sheraieh, the courts which administer Mahomedan sacred law, Lord Cromer applied himself not unsuccessfully to secure the co-operation of Sheikh Mohamed Abdu, a remarkable personality, who had been one of Arabi's ardent followers and had come round to believe that British influence was being honestly directed towards some at least of the best purposes which the few enlightened Nationalists of 1882 had had at heart.

Western education, originally imported into Egypt under French auspices in Mehemet Ali's time, was likewise cast in a French mould. It was not substantially

disturbed, though it was obviously necessary to encourage Egyptian boys to learn English instead of French if the schools were to produce Government servants to work under British officials. A man of Lord Cromer's wide culture and great literary attainments was the last to undervalue the importance of a sound system of liberal education or of the diffusion of elementary knowledge amongst the totally illiterate masses, yet it must be confessed that in no other field has British guidance failed so signally as in that of education. The subject will need to be dealt with more fully in connection with recent political developments in which Egyptian schools and colleges have played so deplorably prominent a part. Our failure as far as the higher purposes of education are concerned was not so conspicuous during the first period of the Occupation as it has now become, and the extent of our failure, even judged by the narrow test of examinations which dominated the whole system, has only been recently disclosed. Lord Cromer's hands were doubtless more than full with other matters over which he considered himself more competent to exercise personal control and supervision, for though he took a keen personal interest in education, he never professed to be an educational expert. That he had at least begun, though rather late in the day, to distrust the fruits which the system was yielding in the rising generation of Egyptians he showed very clearly, not long before he retired, by appointing a keen Egyptian, who had entered public life as one of the Nationalist followers of Arabi, to take over the Ministry of Education. His choice fell upon Saad Pasha Zaghlul. It was a courageous choice. In the light of Zaghlul's later activities, some may think it was an unwise choice. But could Lord Cromer have remained on indefinitely in Egypt, might not his influence have averted much that happened after his departure and explains to some extent even Zaghlul's evolution?

For the first period of the Occupation bears in all its

aspects the stamp of the one great personality who presided over it. Lord Cromer was not, and certainly never claimed to be, infallible. He made, and himself admitted that he made, mistakes. He was not always a good judge of character, and he allowed his judgment to be sometimes overborne by his loyalty to those who served under him, but no one could ever suspect him of favouritism. There was nothing mean or selfish in him or in his policy. In the great measures directly due to his own initiative, Egyptians and Englishmen alike knew that he was prompted by a profound sense of responsibility for the welfare of the people committed to his charge. The best work done by England in Egypt can be traced back to his master mind, and it is the work that has endured. He found the mass of the Egyptian people plunged in the slough of despond by the ruthless despotism and extravagant profligacy of their rulers. Though his own Government gradually gave him as free a hand as was compatible with the international anomalies of England's position in Egypt, he had constantly to contend with reactionary obstruction on the part of the very classes in Cairo to which alone he had to look for assistance in carrying on the executive work of administration. With a patience as indomitable as his energy, he transformed a bankrupt and exhausted country into a land of plenty and contentment unprecedented in its own annals. To that extent at any rate, when he left Egypt at the end of his long tenure of office he could rightly claim to have proved our title to the guardianship which the force of circumstances had driven us to assume over the people of Egypt.

The charge is now commonly heard amongst Egyptians, and it was sometimes brought by his own fellow-countrymen even before he retired, that he had applied himself too exclusively to the material advancement of Egypt and had deliberately neglected the intellectual and moral improvement of her people. He felt very keenly the injustice of that charge, and in the farewell speech

delivered by him on the eve of his final departure, when his physical strength had almost reached the breaking point, there was no more eloquent and moving passage than that in which he hotly repudiated it.

"I hear it frequently stated that, although the material prosperity of Egypt has increased marvellously of late years, nothing has been done towards the moral and intellectual advancement of the people. What! gentlemen, has there been no moral advancement? Is the country any longer governed, as was formally the case, exclusively by the use of the whip? Is not forced labour a thing of the past? Has not the accursed institution of slavery practically ceased to exist? Is it not a fact that every individual in the country, from the highest to the lowest, is now equal in the eyes of the law; that thrift has been encouraged, and that the most humble member of society can reap the fruits of his own labour and industry; that justice is no longer bought and sold; that everyone is free, perhaps some would think too free, to express his opinions; that King Baksheesh has been dethroned from high places and now only lingers in the purlieus and byways of the administration; that the fertilising water of the Nile is distributed impartially to prince and peasant alike; that the sick man can be tended in a well-equipped hospital; that the criminal and the lunatic are no longer treated as wild beasts; that even the lot of the brute creation has not escaped the eyes of the reformer; that the solidarity of interests between the governors and the governed has been recognised in theory and in practice; that every act of the Administration even if at times mistaken—for no one is infallible—bears the mark of honesty of purpose and an earnest desire to secure the well-being of the population; and further, that the funds, very much reduced in amount, which are now taken from the pockets of the taxpayers, instead of being, for the most part, spent on useless palaces and other objects in which they were in no degree interested, are devoted to purposes which are of real benefit to the country? If all these, and many other points to which I could allude, do not constitute some moral advancement, then, of a truth, I do not know what the word morality implies."

If a fine example can help to promote the moral advancement of a people, there could be no finer one either of public or of private morality than that which

Lord Cromer set before Egyptians and Englishmen alike during a full quarter of a century. He cannot in fairness be held responsible for the essential artificiality of a system of control which had to be adapted to abnormal conditions without a parallel in history. But it can be truthfully asserted that to the sincerity of his commanding personality, and to the respect, perhaps not always unmixed with fear, which it universally inspired, was above all else due the large measure of acceptance, and even of confidence and gratitude amongst the masses of the Egyptian people, which British control secured, in spite of the many imperfections of the system, during the first period of the Occupation.

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CHAPTER V

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

LORD CROMER'S retirement marked the end of a period. He was conscious of it himself, not because he was one of those who believe that no one is capable of filling their place, but because he felt that the conditions which had enabled him to concentrate in his own hands the immense influence he had wielded to the best of his great abilities were passing away—had in fact already passed away—and that the days of a paternal autocracy almost unlimited within its sphere were over. He had himself had to create the machinery best calculated in his judgment to reconcile the needs of Egypt with the entanglements of a political situation which the British Government had always hesitated to define, and clumsy as in the circumstances that machinery was bound to be, he had been able to keep it in fairly smooth working order because it was he who had built it, piece by piece, and he kept a close and constant touch with, and was always accessible to, the small but picked body of Englishmen who ran it under his guidance and supervision. One of the most notable features of British control during that first period is the small number of British officials then employed in Egypt, though the best work we have done in that country was accomplished during that period. But the machinery, to which new pieces had been necessarily added from time to time to meet the steady expansion of the work it had to do, had already

begun to outgrow the control of one man, however exceptional his ability and experience, and however untiring his industry.

Moreover, for the first time the British Government were now in a position to cast off to some extent the embarrassing reserve to which they had hitherto felt themselves constrained, in regard at least to the duration of the Occupation. Assurances of an early evacuation had long ago been dropped, but only recently had they frankly admitted that they were unable to set any term to the duration of the Occupation. Lord Cromer had entered upon his task when British Ministers contemplated and honestly desired an early withdrawal from Egypt, and he had approached it from that point of view. So long as there was a chance of an early withdrawal, he had no option but to make the best of an abnormal situation with all the disabilities it involved. His policy had been essentially an administrative policy, because only in matters of administration, and by no means, as we have seen, in all such matters, had his hands been relatively free. The large measure of prosperity which he had restored to Egypt had gradually enabled him to loosen some of the restrictions to which Egypt was subjected by international obligations both of ancient and more recent date. But decisive relief only came with the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, when France finally acquiesced in our predominant position, and, by agreeing to far-reaching changes in the functions of the *Caisse*, which she had used frequently and effectively as a weapon of sheer obstruction, gave an earnest of her determination to drop henceforth the part she had too often played, not merely of a vigilant if aggressive watch-dog, but of mere dog-in-the-manger. In spite of the hostility displayed towards him for many years by Frenchmen in Cairo and in Paris, Lord Cromer had himself worked steadily for a *rapprochement*, because he realised more fully than anyone that it would open up new possibilities for England in Egypt, which he was

compelled meanwhile to put aside as beyond his reach. No sooner, indeed, had the Anglo-French Convention been signed than he devoted the short time still left to him to the preparation of an exhaustive scheme for a far-reaching revision of the Capitulations, which had been outside the range of practical politics until it became possible to count on the friendly co-operation instead of the stubborn opposition of France, and to hold out to the other Powers, as a sure safeguard for the interests of their communities, the prospect of an indefinite continuance of British control.

Lord Cromer was at the same time not unconscious that there were among the Egyptian people themselves the stirrings of a new spirit which might, if prudently encouraged and directed, rally new forces to the cause of progress and reform in those very spheres of national life upon which alien agencies were unsuited to bring any controlling influence directly to bear. He believed that the Egyptians had to work out their moral and intellectual salvation for themselves. What he had regarded as his primary duty was to redeem them from material conditions of abject misery and despair which paralyse all moral and intellectual effort. It was an achievement that had been within his compass, because sound statesmanship, exceptional powers of organisation, unremitting vigilance, and unwearying perseverance could command success; because in the main it needed only a succession of practical measures in which cause and effect could be accurately calculated; because he was in a position to supply the driving power in the shape of an efficient and upright staff of workers, and to uphold their authority against all serious attempts at indigenous obstruction.

The moral and intellectual regeneration of a people is not a task in which it is possible for any man or group of men to command success—least of all if they are aliens and of a different religion and civilisation. For it provokes at once the resistance of incalculable forces,

of ancient traditions and prejudices rooted in the race and creed, of a mentality and psychology which often escape analysis, but of which the antagonism is none the less real because it is imponderable. It cannot in any case be the work of a few years, even in our rapidly moving times, nor is there much hope of carrying it through when practically no help can be looked for from the other side. And with few exceptions there were scarcely any influential Egyptians who were prepared to assist and not to obstruct such efforts as Lord Cromer could make for the regeneration of the Egyptian people. For most of the very measures taken to restore the material progress of the country placed increasing restraints upon the old despotic and corrupt methods of government. The enforcement of equal treatment for rich and poor in the matter of taxation and of water rights, the abolition of the *corvée*, even judicial reforms, meant so many attacks upon the vested interests of the old ruling classes—interests far more precious to them than the moral regeneration of their nation, even had they believed in such a thing.

To those ruling classes belonged for the greater part, by birth or by common traditions, the official hierarchy from which under a hybrid system, which still vested all executive authority in Egyptians and assigned only advisory functions to Englishmen, Ministers and provincial governors still had to be drawn. Few of them were in principle inclined and competent in practice to co-operate with the British controlling power. The Armenian Nubar, who had played an honourable and often courageous part under the old *régime*, stood in many respects quite apart from the rest, in culture and intellect as well as in character. The sufferings of his own race in Turkey had, he told me on one occasion, taught him to sympathise with the sufferings of the *fellaheen* in Egypt, as both were due to the cruel and irresponsible selfishness of arbitrary power. The reforms which appealed to him were, however, those of which he could clearly

appreciate the humanitarian character, such as the abolition of the *corvée*, which he supported heart and soul. But though imbued with French official formalism, he was not an administrator, and whilst he admired the English, and readily admitted that their presence in Egypt was indispensable, he resented, not only their occasional brusqueness, but also their businesslike methods, and above all Lord Cromer's insistence on rigid economy, which savoured to him of parsimony. Hence, though Nubar was more than once called upon to step into the breach as Prime Minister, a fundamental *incompatibilité d'humeur* prevented sustained co-operation between two men who had more in common than either of them had with other Egyptian Ministers.

To Riaz Pasha, for whom Lord Cromer had a strong personal liking, the abuses of the old *régime*, against which he had also courageously stood up when it required great courage to do so, were as hateful as to Nubar, but he wanted to reform them in his own way, which was an anti-European way. For he was too convinced a Mahomedan to believe that good could really come to a Mahomedan country through European intervention. He recognised at times the necessity of working with Lord Cromer, and he tried honestly to do so, but he was too rugged and too unbending to adapt himself to new conditions, even though he was fain to accept them as at least temporarily inevitable. It was not until Mustapha Fehmi took office in 1895 that Lord Cromer found an Egyptian Prime Minister who, with far less originality, possessed the sound common-sense, the modest unselfishness, and the patient industry which enabled him to render solid but unobtrusive service in that capacity both to his own country and to the British controlling power for nearly fourteen years.

Of greater importance even than the Prime Minister was the personality of the Khedive, who could not so easily be removed. Fortunately for nine years, *i.e.*, during the most critical years of his pro-Consulate,

Lord Cromer, whatever his other difficulties, could always count on the loyalty and generally on the intelligent good-will of the Khedive. Tewfik had behaved with great dignity and real courage during the stormy months of 1882, refusing sturdily even to seek shelter on a British man-of-war during the bombardment of Alexandria, though the city was in the hands of an army in open rebellion against him. He knew, nevertheless, that he owed the safety of his throne solely to British support, and he learnt to realise that, not only his own dynastic interests, but also the interests of his people could best be served by acquiescence in the policy of the British controlling power. A good Mahomedan, clean-living, naturally kind-hearted, and with little of the Oriental despot about him, he had a genuine dread of religious fanaticism, of which he had experienced the dangers. But he had not the greatness or the energy to place himself whole-heartedly at the head of an Egyptian party of reform. Lord Cromer has pithily summed up the real service that Tewfik rendered to his country: "He should be remembered as the Khedive who allowed Egypt to be reformed in spite of the Egyptians." His qualities were negative rather than positive, but even with those limitations they were extremely helpful to Lord Cromer, who was less than ever tempted to underrate them when Abbas Hilmi became Khedive on his father's death in 1892.

The French, for whom Tewfik had very little liking, would have been extremely jealous had he sent his son to be educated in England. So to give umbrage to neither of the two great rival Powers, he sent the boy to Vienna. The choice was not a happy one, for the reactionary and militarist atmosphere of the Austrian capital tended to encourage a naturally self-willed disposition. Abbas brought back with him to the Abdeen Palace the ideas of the Hofburg, and within a short time of his accession he tried a fall first with Kitchener, who was then Sirdar of the Egyptian army, by affronting in public

the British officers of the frontier force he had just reviewed, and then with Cromer by wantonly provoking a Ministerial crisis. The result of these petulant outbreaks in both cases taught him to be more discreet as long as Lord Cromer remained in Egypt. Nevertheless, the influence, however circumscribed, which the head of the State can always find opportunities of exercising, was henceforth used, whenever and wherever he thought he could safely do so, for petty intrigues and irritating obstruction.

How was the younger generation of Egyptians likely to shape that had been growing up since the Occupation? Would it provide the active support for which even in questions most vital to the material progress of Egypt Lord Cromer had looked, generally in vain, to the older generation? Would it accept even with the same reluctant submission as its elders the continuance of an alien tutelage? Would it apply itself seriously to the work of social and religious reform, which alone can rescue a nation from the tyranny of ancient customs and beliefs, and train it up to modern conceptions of progress and freedom? Would it learn the right lessons from Western education and increasing contact with the West? Would it resist the temptations of the worse side of Western civilisation and absorb its better spirit? An educated or semi-educated middle class, small in numbers but of considerable potential influence, was growing up, with new aspirations and a new sense of independence. There were signs that a new Egypt was in the making. Was it to be really a new Egypt rebuilt on more solid social foundations and fashioned on finer moral and intellectual lines, or was it to be only the old Egypt over again, in which "the big fish swallow the small," with just a sham Western façade?

There were only a few tests that could be applied for the purpose of answering these questions. Egypt had been endowed with rudimentary representative institutions according to the recommendations embodied in Lord Dufferin's Report of 1883, to which effect was

given in a Khedivial Decree of the same year promulgating the constitution of a Legislative Council and of a General Assembly, as well as of Provincial Councils. The Legislative Council consisted of thirty members, of whom fourteen, including the President and one of the Vice-Presidents, were nominated by the Khedive, and the other sixteen were elected on the basis of universal but indirect suffrage. Every village elected its own delegate, and these delegates elected the members of the Provincial Councils, which chose from among themselves the representatives who were to sit in the Legislative Council. The General Assembly was merely an expansion of the Legislative Council obtained by the addition to the latter body of the Ministers for the time being and of forty-six Notables, eleven representing the principal towns and thirty-five the rural districts, all elected by the same process as the members of the Provincial Councils. These bodies possessed only one substantial hold over the Executive. No direct tax, land tax, or personal tax could be imposed without the assent of the General Assembly. But the Capitulations so completely tied the hands of the Egyptian Government in the matter of new taxation that only on one important occasion did the General Assembly have an opportunity of exercising a right which in theory is of the essence of popular control over the Executive. In all other respects both bodies were merely consultative bodies with powers analogous to those of the Indian Legislative Councils as at first constituted. Every law and every decree of an important administrative character had to be submitted to the Council before promulgation, but Government was not compelled to accept any amendments, though it was bound to state its reasons. The same was the case with Budget estimates, as well as with financial accounts. The Assembly had also to be consulted as regards public loans, the construction of intra-provincial railways and canals, and certain questions affecting the land tax.

The Provincial Councils, very much smaller bodies, also elective, of which the Governor was *ex-officio* President, had to be consulted in matters of local interests and in regard to measures for the improvement of agriculture, sanitation, and education. None of these bodies could be described as really representative of the people, for the election of the primary delegates by the villages was in most instances a mere farce, or at least a foregone conclusion. In his utter lack of education, political or other, the *fellah's* vision could not be expected to extend beyond the limits of his village life. Within those limits he was either the humble servant of the Omdeh, or his bitter enemy, for most villages are a constant prey to internal dissension. The Omdeh, or village headman, who was himself a Government official, could usually enforce the election of his own nominee, unless there happened to be a more powerful rival faction, whose chief object in that case was to blacken the Omdeh's face by returning the opposition candidate. But the opposition was apt to cease as soon as the successful delegate got to headquarters and took part in the election of the Provincial members, when his chief anxiety was to ingratiate himself with the higher authorities. On the whole, the system was probably the only one practicable in the circumstances, and experience would, it was hoped, gradually mitigate its defects. In any case, the Provincial Councils were too small and met too rarely to play any very important part except in the constitution of the Legislative Council and the General Assembly.

These bodies had been content at first to discharge the very modest and inconspicuous duties allotted to them, and it must be recorded to their credit that as far back as 1889 the Legislative Council, in which the large landowners' interest preponderated, displayed genuine public spirit in assenting to the increase, though a small one, of the land tax required by Government to defray part of the cost of the abolition of the *corvée*, which could not be covered in any other way owing to the obstructive attitude

of the *Caisse*. When these bodies began to display greater activity, it unfortunately assumed the form it generally takes in assemblies that have never been given the chance of acquiring any sense of responsibility from the exercise of real power. The lawyers and other representatives of the newly educated classes took the lead and were prone to indulge in voluble eloquence and unsparing criticism not always based on any knowledge or recognition of the facts. But even unintelligent or exaggerated criticism is probably better for a Government than no criticism at all, and as Ministers learnt to take the Legislative Council more into its confidence, and to explain its own position and purposes more clearly, there had been a marked improvement in the tone and substance of discussions, and the recommendations made by the Council had often been such that Government was fain to accept them in whole or in part, or at least to give adequate reasons for their rejection or postponement. Lord Cromer certainly did not despair of the future of self-governing institutions in Egypt, though he strongly advocated caution and patience in regard to them.

One of the most encouraging symptoms was the growing interest shown by the provincial towns in the creation and extension of municipalities. Here again the Egyptian Government was terribly hampered by the Capitulations, which made it practically impossible to impose municipal taxation from which foreigners could remain exempt. The idea of paying voluntary taxes was at first very uncongenial to the Egyptian mind, but gradually the people of several important towns, where foreign residents had the good sense to set the example, became reconciled to it, and by the year 1906 Mixed Municipal Commissions, on which Egyptians and foreigners sat together, had been established in Mansourah and five other important towns, the Central Government merely making certain contributions to their expenditure. At the same time, Local Commissions, which had the same powers as the

Mixed Commissions except in regard to municipal finance, were introduced in twenty-seven smaller towns with the object of stimulating their interest in the management of their own affairs, but in all these Government still had to defray all expenditure.

If, on the other hand, the Press was to be taken as reflecting the sentiments or expressing the opinion of young Egypt, the outlook was discouraging. Few of the foreign newspapers published in Egypt, though their number was considerable, had ever set before the Egyptians any very high standard of journalism. They catered each for its own small circle of readers belonging to different nationalities, and their horizon was generally narrow. The Franco-Egyptian Press during the first fifteen years of the Occupation had set a deplorable example in its calculated malevolence towards the British controlling power and indeed towards every British official in Egypt. It is perhaps not very surprising that the native Press followed suit. Journalism was not regarded at first as a profession of much account. It attracted chiefly the failures of the Europeanised schools and colleges, whose hopes of employment in the public services had been disappointed, and who were proportionately embittered. The ordinary Egyptian who has a small difference of opinion with his neighbour at once shrieks at the top of his voice, cursing his antagonist's forebears to the third or fourth generation, whilst the other neighbours gather round to enjoy the ferocious repartees that are bandied about. The newspapers caught that unfortunate habit, and it evidently was to the taste of their readers, for violence was invariably rewarded with an increasing circulation. One of the worst tendencies they developed was to show gross intolerance and unfairness towards all those who differed from them, and polemics on public questions were apt to degenerate into personal attacks which savoured sometimes of blackmail. Newspaper proprietors were mostly men of straw open to various methods of Oriental persua-

sion. Practical questions or those that postulated knowledge or close reasoning found little favour with either writers or readers. They preferred rhetorical generalities or vehement political lucubrations with high-sounding catchwords.

With the revival of Egyptian Nationalism, it was the more extreme school that captured nearly the whole of the native Press. Englishmen are seldom disposed to resent even the most hostile criticism if conveyed in some other shape than mere vulgar abuse. British officials tired of reading long diatribes as monotonous as they were violent. These were the chief stock-in-trade even of men like Ali Yusef, the editor of the *Muayyed*, and Mustapha Kamel, the founder of the *Lewa*, both in their way remarkable personalities, whose influence survives to the present day. They too relied on scathing denunciation rather than on arguments in the conduct of their great journalistic campaigns against British supremacy. Lord Cromer says in one of his Reports that he tried at one time to follow the native Press carefully in the hope that something might be learnt from it in regard to questions of administration and to local matters, and possibly as to legitimate grievances which might be remedied or deserve inquiry. But he failed to find a single accurate, well-argued, or useful article on such matters even as education or finance, or the working of the judicial system. He was nevertheless too staunch a believer in the freedom of the Press to curtail it, though pressed to do so by many Egyptians, and not only by those of the old school to whom it had always been anathema.

The unmeasured recklessness of the Press was not the only disquieting feature of a new movement which was in itself neither unnatural nor reprehensible. The resistance which British protection enabled Egypt to offer to any further encroachments by Turkey and by the other Powers on Egyptian rights had to that extent strengthened her position as a separate, though still

far from independent, political entity under the Treaties and Firmans of 1840–1841, and it tended at the same time to stimulate amongst the Egyptian people a sense of nationhood, which led the more impatient amongst them to resent being kept in tutelage even by the Power whose authority shielded them from aggression. Benefits conferred by another nation seldom elicit any deep or abiding gratitude, and a new generation was growing up in Egypt which had not known Pharaoh and could not draw for itself the only rational conclusions possible from a comparison between the cruel hardships of the old *régime* and the occasional and much slighter vexations of the new order of things. As the number of British newcomers increased who knew little of the people or of their habits and language, friction became more frequent. The lamentable Denshawi incident is not forgotten to the present day. The extreme severity of the judicial retribution that followed an affray between ignorant, if brutal, villagers and a small party of British officers out shooting was honestly regarded by most Egyptians, and not only by Egyptians, as needlessly vindictive. No Englishman can read the story of the wretched men's execution without a qualm of compunction. Trivial grievances, often of a personal character, help to explain the increasing jealousy of British ascendancy in the newly-educated classes and especially amongst Egyptian officials, but it is Denshawi that rankled in the memory of the *fellaheen*.

Few Egyptians, however, at that time denied that they had learnt many admirable lessons from us, but they claimed that there were other and greater lessons which they had been learning for themselves from contact with the Western civilisation brought by us as never before to their very doors. Why should we continue to deny to them the opportunity of applying to the governance of their own country the principles of freedom to which we professed to owe our own greatness? Why should we refuse them the rights of self-government

which we were already conceding to the Boers of the Transvaal who had only recently stood up in arms against us? To fortify passionate appeals of that sort, Western education always provides the East with abundant arguments drawn from our own history and literature, and the usual reply, however well founded, that the East is not yet ripe for the boons for which it clamours, is too deeply wounding to its susceptibilities and self-confidence to be accepted as adequate. Oriental impatience to assimilate the lessons of political independence which it learns from the West is seldom accompanied by a similar impatience to emancipate itself from the self-imposed trammels of social conditions and domestic institutions and religious beliefs far more fundamentally incompatible with Western ideas of liberty and progress. On the contrary, appeals based upon the right to enjoy the full benefits of admission to the higher plane of Western civilisation very often coincide with a parallel movement to conjure up memories of a more or less mythical past in order to rehabilitate Eastern civilisation and exalt it as at least potentially superior to the vaunted civilisation which has given the West for the time being a dominant position in the world.

This curiously illogical attitude was very marked amongst some of the most influential leaders of young Egyptian Nationalism. The new Nationalist movement claimed to be merely a revival of the movement which had actually originated in the fertile brain of the Khedive Ismail as a last desperate attempt to evade interference by the Powers with his methods of criminal profligacy, and had been afterwards developed by Arabi and directed by him in the first instance against the ascendancy in the Egyptian army and bureaucracy of the old Turkish caste, with the ruling Khedivial house as its foremost representative. The Nationalist movement of Arabi's time ultimately assumed to some extent a racial and religious character, anti-foreign and anti-Christian. But it never ceased to hate and distrust the Turk, even when

Abdul Hamid began to court it for his own purposes, both as Sultan and as Khalif. In the new Nationalism there were many different currents, but one of the strongest flowed from Constantinople, where Abdul Hamid's Pan-Islamic propaganda, covertly encouraged by William II, who saw in him a useful instrument of his own ambitions, had reached out, not unsuccessfully, into Egypt. The Nationalist leaders no doubt had no wish to revive Turkish political domination in Egypt, but they thought they could safely use the religious sentiment, which must always draw a Mahomedan people towards Turkey in any differences arising between her and a Christian Power, to obtain popular support for a campaign against British control which, as a mere agitation on the part of the educated classes for self-government and for the elimination of British influence from the administration of the country, left the masses at that time more than cold. As was shown by a chance quarrel in the streets of Alexandria which had led to an ugly outbreak of Mahomedan violence, the cry of *Din! Din!*—"Our religion! Our religion!"—is always a potent cry in all Mahomedan countries, even in Egypt, where there is probably less religious fanaticism than in most; and some of the leading Nationalists had tried covertly to raise it, in a more subtle and far more dangerous form, even in such a clearly and exclusively political issue as that which arose in 1906 between England and Turkey over the invasion of Egyptian territory in the Sinai peninsula by Ottoman troops. Pan-Islamism in its larger aspects was not likely to get a permanent hold of Egypt, nor did Egyptian Nationalism as a whole come under its influence; but that it was actually impressed into the service of a movement that claimed to represent progress and enlightenment could not but give food for reflection. For apart from its political aspects, Pan-Islamism at the very best is inspired by a belief in the superiority of Islam, not merely as the only form of religion that makes for man's salvation in a future life, but also as a social system

based on immutable laws which clash at almost every point with our modern civilisation, and at none more irreconcilably than at that of the relations between the sexes.

There were, however, fortunately, also other and more hopeful forms of Egyptian Nationalism, which in one way derived far more directly from Arabi's Nationalist movement. Not a few of his followers recognised, as he himself did, that the British had worked wonders for the *fellaheen*, and had secured to every Egyptian a new sense of individual freedom. They believed that our presence was still the main bulwark against the predatory ambitions of the Khedive Abbas and the revival of the old *régime* of despotism and corruption. They looked forward to national independence as an ultimate goal, but only to be reached when the masses, and not merely a few privileged classes, had attained to the consciousness of nationhood. What they asked was that Great Britain should gradually and cautiously relax her tutelage, give a larger number of young Egyptians a share in the administration, and afford a wider scope to representative institutions in which the people could be taught the art of self-government. Many of them were far more devout Mahomedans than those who had associated themselves with Pan-Islamism. They belonged to a school so profoundly imbued with faith in human progress as an essential part of faith in a beneficent Providence, that they did not consider it a sin to seek to interpret the laws derived from the Koran and the Traditions in the light of human needs which did not exist in the seventh century amongst Arab tribes almost isolated from the rest of the world, but which undeniably exist in the twentieth century when isolation is no longer possible. The leader of this school was Sheikh Mohamed Abdu, who had been closely associated with Arabi in 1881–1882, and sentenced in consequence to internment. He was one of the first of Arabi's friends to see how premature and misdirected

had been their attempt to snatch at an independence which, if they could have obtained it, they would have been quite unable to preserve, and he became a genuine and staunch convert to British influence, whilst remaining a frank critic of our shortcomings as he saw them. After a time he had accepted a judgeship in a Mahomedan court and risen in 1899 to the position of Grand Mufti, in which he exerted for a time a great and liberalising influence on the teachers and students of El Azhar. His death in 1905 was a serious loss to sober Egyptian Nationalism and to the progressive school of Mahomedan thought.

Though Lord Cromer had reached an age at which most people, and especially those who have long enjoyed almost undisputed authority, are apt to resent the intrusion of new ideas and new men, he knew the older generation of Egyptians too well not to realise that, if it was ever to become possible for the Egyptians to work out their own salvation, the only hope lay in the younger generation, and that amongst them there were elements of considerable promise whose co-operation he was not too proud to seek against both reactionary and revolutionary forces which he was too wise to underrate. The reactionary forces at least had been gathering strength at Yildiz Kiosk on the Bosphorus and in the Palace in Cairo, and he was quite aware that they were only waiting for his departure from Egypt to become more actively aggressive. He felt, as he had perhaps never done in earlier years, that in the new "politically minded" Egypt that had grown up around him the great work he had done lacked the support of some organised party whose programme, as he said in the last Report penned by him from Cairo, should involve "not opposition to, but co-operation with Europeans in the introduction of Western civilisation into their country." He hoped he had found it in the moderate group of Nationalists whose evolution he had watched with interest and sympathy. It may at first sight seem

perplexing that the man whom Lord Cromer picked out as typical of all that was best in that group, and as the most promising representative of sober Egyptian Nationalism, was Saad Zaghlul, whose appointment he recommended to the Ministry of Education as the one in which a wisely progressive influence was most needed for guiding the footsteps of a yet younger generation. It may be well to recall in his own words the opinion which Lord Cromer had formed of Saad Zaghlul, who was one of the very few Egyptians to whom he made special reference in the farewell speech from which I quoted another passage in the preceding chapter :

"Lastly, gentlemen, I should like to mention the name of one with whom I have only recently co-operated, but for whom, in that short time, I have learned to entertain a high regard. Unless I am much mistaken, a career of great public usefulness lies before the present Minister of Education, Saad Zaghlul Pasha. He possesses all the qualities necessary to serve his country. He is honest ; he is capable ; he has the courage of his convictions ; he has been abused by many of the less worthy of his own countrymen. These are high qualifications. He should go far."

The part which Saad Zaghlul has played in the last Egyptian crisis, and especially as head of the Egyptian Nationalist Delegation in Paris, is hardly that for which Lord Cromer had cast him. But is he alone to blame for the change that has come over him ?

The wonderful transformation scene effected during the first half of the Occupation was over when Lord Cromer left Egypt. He had rescued her from oppression and ruin and raised her to an unprecedented pitch of material prosperity. At the same time, British influence and increased contact with Western ideas had helped to liberate new and conflicting forces which made new demands upon British statesmanship. It had a great opportunity, for the Anglo-French Agreement had given Great Britain a much freer hand in Egypt than she had hitherto had, and the General Election of 1905 had brought the Liberal party once more into power.

Lord Cromer had never identified himself with any political party, and by family traditions as well as by temperament he was a Liberal rather than a Tory. But his retirement from a post of immense but undefined responsibility following within a relatively short time the change of Government at home made it unquestionably much easier to modify the lines on which British control had hitherto been conducted, and adapt them as far as possible to the new conditions which, with his usual clearness of vision, he had himself discerned. To turn this opportunity to good account, it was, however, essential that there should be no departure from the principle ever present to Lord Cromer's mind that our position in Egypt was that of trustees for her people.

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CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE OCCUPATION

THE first period of British control had been one of high endeavour and great achievement. There was a unity and vigour of direction which could be perhaps only maintained by one who had himself shaped the whole system and whose personal authority and experience could to a great extent mitigate the defects arising out of the extraordinarily anomalous conditions under which it had grown up. With Lord Cromer's retirement British control passed into a second and chequered phase, of which it is far more difficult to attempt a sketch. It is more deeply affected by cross-currents of Oriental intrigue. There are fewer authoritative documents to draw upon. One has to piece together the testimony of many witnesses whose evidence cannot always be unbiassed, and however anxious one may be to avoid invidious reflections upon individuals in criticising a system of which they formed part, conclusions have to be drawn which can hardly fail to offend some personal susceptibilities.

Lord Cromer's first two successors only held the post for very brief terms compared with his long tenure of office. Sir Eldon Gorst, who had spent many years in Egypt under Lord Cromer and was practically designated by him to be his successor, died soon after retiring in 1911 and had been a sick man for some time before he left Cairo. When Lord Kitchener, who had succeeded

him, came home on leave in 1914, the Great War broke out, and he was fated never to return to Egypt. Neither Sir Eldon Gorst nor Lord Kitchener himself, with all his great prestige in Egypt and the Sudan and his occasional flashes of intuition, ever filled the stage as Lord Cromer had done. Their temperaments were different, but both differed still more from Lord Cromer's, and for different reasons they put a different interpretation upon the exercise of British control. Sir Eldon Gorst had not the authority, and Lord Kitchener, masterful as he was, had not the capacity, or the patience, required to exercise the same close supervision and steadying influence over a bureaucracy which, as it grew in size, tended to become more mechanical and to split up into groups and cliques, often divided by personal antagonisms and jealousies.

A great deal of useful and excellent work still continued to be done, but, as compared with the earlier period of the Occupation, the later period has very few great measures of administrative policy to show. This was perhaps inevitable, for it was no small task merely to carry on and complete the work that was already under way. Irrigation still remained in the forefront. In Sir Eldon Gorst's time the great dam at Assuan was heightened so as to bring nearly a million acres of land lying waste in the northern Delta under cultivation, and large drainage works to relieve waterlogged tracts were taken in hand. Schemes for storing the waters of the Blue and White Nile in the Sudan were prepared under Lord Kitchener's personal direction, and he took the keenest interest in them, not only because they opened up prospects of an almost unlimited supply of water to Egypt as well as the Sudan, but because he saw what big political issues were bound up with the permanent control from the Sudan of the Nile waters upon which the very existence of Egypt depends. The war delayed them, and in the shape which they finally assumed they have provoked, partly owing to the secrecy

in which they have been enveloped, very bitter cor troversies which would have been avoided had the exampl set by Lord Cromer been followed, when he submitte the projects for the Assuan dam to a committee compose of the most highly qualified non-British experts, free fro all suspicion of subserviency to British interests, befor he applied to the *Caisse* to sanction the heavy expenditur required from the Egyptian Government.

This is only one of the instances that have show the disappearance, after the Anglo-French Agreemen of the rigid financial control exercised by the *Caisse* t have been not altogether an unmixed blessing. Whils the prosperity of Egypt increased almost uninterruptedl and revenue continued to expand, the Financial Advise no longer had to reckon with the vigilant criticism c unfriendly foreigners, nor had he Lord Cromer's expe eye upon him. Hence economy ceased to be a cardina virtue, and money was spent much more freely. Durin Lord Kitchener's tenure of office, especially, the ol parsimony was maintained only in regard to educatio and other things in which he took no very lively interes None could drive a harder bargain than Lord Kitchene when he chose, but after Sir Paul Harvey resigned th Financial Advisership, no one was inclined to pres financial objections to any scheme that found favou with him. He had the soldier's eye for the importanc of communications, and to him Cairo owes, not only th opening of many new roads and the clearing of man open spaces, but also the construction of excellent high roads to Alexandria and other parts of the country which the growth of motor traffic required. Appreciatin fully the agricultural interests of Egypt, he encourage also the development of light railways and the introduc tion of special grain depots and cotton markets to assis the small cultivator and protect him from fraudulen practices. To him too belongs the credit of havin created in 1911 a special Ministry of Agriculture. Th establishment of an Agricultural Bank, which it wa

hoped would rescue the *fellaheen* from the hands of extortionate village usurers, had not stopped the alarming growth of their indebtedness. Prosperity seemed to stimulate rather than to arrest it. Lord Kitchener took up the question with his customary energy, and the most important measure with which his name will remain associated in Egypt was that known as "The Five Feddan Law" (one feddan equals one acre roughly). It was enacted in 1912 on the Indian analogy of the Punjab Land Alienation Act, which was passed in order to save the *ryot* of Upper India from the worst consequences of his inexperience and improvidence. Though hastily prepared and open to much criticism, it was a real boon to the small peasant proprietary, as it made it illegal in future to sell up the land or agricultural chattels of any owner of less than five feddans. Over a million *fellaheen* came into this category.

Though Lord Kitchener travelled a great deal about the country and had through his former connection with the Egyptian army a large circle of personal acquaintances, to whom he was always very accessible, amongst all classes in the rural districts as well as in Cairo, he could not make good, even if he was conscious of it, the gradual loss of contact between many of the most important agencies of British control and the people, which was due to a variety of causes. In the early days, when a small body of British officials was engaged in planning and carrying out great schemes of reconstruction, whether irrigation works or readjustment of land tax or administrative reforms, they spent the greater part of their time moving up and down the country, living mostly in camp and always in close contact with the people, always ready to listen to their stories and to hear their grievances, and the *fellaheen*, simple and good-natured folk on the whole, who love to hear themselves talk, learned to regard them as their friends. Then, as the tremendous pressure of work subsided, and the original pioneers passed off the stage, the system of personal co-operation was

to grudge the time spent away from the more leisured atmosphere of departmental headquarters and the greater social attractions of the capital. Less careful and less patient vigilance was brought to bear on subordinate Egyptian officials, wretchedly ill-paid, who when left too much to themselves were prone to relapse into the old ways of Oriental officialdom. Though the days of financial stringency were over, the Finance Department could not apparently realise that it is useless to preach honesty to men to whom you deny a living wage. At the same time, both under Sir Eldon Gorst and Lord Kitchener it was sometimes deemed expedient to turn an indulgent eye on malpractices in high places, and there is nothing that the Egyptian is more quick to note. The people were not only less closely in touch with British officials, but no longer ventured or were encouraged to come forward and air their grievances. The importation of the motor and the motor cycle widened the breach. Officials covered greater distances, but saw less and heard far less, for as they hurried round their districts there was no longer the same easy access to them as in the old days when they rode leisurely through the fields and along the canal banks on horseback or on the humble Egyptian donkey, and camped for the night and often for days together outside the village.

Many Englishmen did their best to keep up the old practices and the old traditions, but the newcomers were numerous, and the more the number of British officials increased, the greater was naturally the likelihood of some amongst them being men inclined by temperament to ride roughshod over the susceptibilities of others, and especially when the others belonged to a different race. Imagination is not the quality usually most conspicuous in Englishmen, and without it there can seldom be

much tact or sympathy, which consists, after all, chiefly in seeing and making allowance for one's neighbour's point of view. It had not been altogether a happy idea to turn Ghezireh into a great residential quarter for British officials in close proximity to the Sporting Club, where the social life of the British community tended more and more to centre round tennis and golf and polo. There was originally no desire to exclude Egyptians from a club which they had helped to found, but most of them gradually dropped out when they found that their room was preferred to their company. The question of social relations between Englishmen and Egyptians must always be a very difficult one, as, outside the office hours, which bring them into close and often, but not always, friendly contact, they have, as a rule, few interests or pursuits in common, and Egyptian domestic institutions and the whole Egyptian outlook where women are concerned practically rule out any intimate intercourse in the home circle. Many Englishmen feel strongly that so long as they are shut out from the Egyptian home, they are entitled to discriminate very carefully in welcoming Egyptians to their own homes. Such intercourse as there is between their wives and Egyptian ladies, who can only receive them in the seclusion of the *hareem*, and cannot return their visits, is apt to be very formal even when the latter are highly educated and speak excellent English or French, as is now not very infrequently the case. More might doubtless be done by Englishmen and more still by Englishwomen to bridge this social gulf, and it might well be regarded as part of the duty of those who hold a position in the official world to exert themselves in that direction. Unfortunately, after Lord Cromer left there was no lady holding the recognised position of leader of Anglo-Egyptian society to set the example.

Egyptians maintain, and many Englishmen regretfully admit, that during the later years of the Occupation some British officials, even in high positions, showed not only aloofness but often actual discourtesy in social

ordinarily sensitive and apt to think that offence is meant when none is quite intended. But they could hardly be so common and rankle so deeply had there not been a good deal of substance in them. The resentment was all the greater as the assumption of superiority seemed to have coincided, generally speaking, with a diminution of real capacity. For it happened that just at this time the effect of creating a regular Civil Service with a necessarily very small cadre made itself felt in the difficulty of satisfying reasonable claims to promotion within so narrow a field of selection. So whilst on the one hand a considerable increase was taking place in the total number of Englishmen employed in relatively subordinate positions, which created great discontent amongst the Egyptians, there was a frequent shuffling and reshuffling of posts in the higher ranks, and appointments even of Advisers, which gave rise to equally adverse criticism. If, as Lord Cromer had always insisted, we were acting as trustees for the people of Egypt, it was our bounden duty to select men for the discharge of the different branches of our trust who could show at least *prima facie* evidence of qualification. When all that an Egyptian could be told in justification of the appointment of a particular Adviser to his Department was that he would soon learn his work, the Egyptian could well reply that Advisers were supposed to be appointed, not to learn their job, but to teach it. The confused cross-currents of Cairo politics were another disturbing factor that tended to increase the friction, always more or less unavoidable, under a system in which both power and responsibility are ill-defined, and the British official who is supposed only to advise is often sorely tempted, however scrupulous he may be, to trespass on the executive authority, usually reserved

in theory to the Egyptian official. Goaded on by political agitators or secretly encouraged by Palace friends, the Egyptian stood more and more on his dignity, and the Englishman was inclined to retaliate by showing less and less consideration for susceptibilities behind which he suspected sheer obstruction. It must be remembered too that the virulent campaign of insult and calumny against British officials conducted in violent Nationalist and anti-British papers, believed to be subsidised by the Khedive, was not calculated to maintain an atmosphere of sympathy and good will amongst its victims.

Sir Eldon Gorst had served for many years under Lord Cromer in different branches of the Egyptian administration, and though he had been back for some little time to the Foreign Office before he returned to Egypt as representative of the British Government, he had an intimate acquaintance with the whole system and the whole *personnel.* But for the very reason that he had been part of it himself, he lacked enough prestige to assert his authority effectively, and the machine had in fact grown too unwieldy to be controlled by any one individual. Lord Kitchener had the defects of his great qualities. He threw himself into the work that interested him with extraordinary energy, but he was impatient of any contradiction, even when his contempt for details often stood badly in need of correction. Two British Advisers were thus driven to resign, and their places were not taken by men who inspired the same public confidence. He was a great hustler, but not a great administrator, and he even more than Sir Eldon Gorst reaped the dead-sea-fruits of the change of British policy which at the beginning of the second phase of the Occupation restricted the degree of British control to be exercised over the Egyptian organs of government.

British policy had set before itself in 1907 a higher aim than that to which Lord Cromer's mainly administrative policy had been directed so long as there was no other practical policy compatible with the restraints

imposed upon British control by the uncertainty of our own position in Egypt and the constant fear of international complications. The Liberal Government, recently returned to power in England, eagerly adopted the suggestion, which had originated with Lord Cromer himself, that with the end of Anglo-French rivalry we could afford to give the Egyptian Government greater freedom of action in matters both of policy and of administration, even at the cost of less efficiency. Their idea was that by relaxing British control they would help the Egyptian people to learn for themselves the first lessons of self-government, which some measure of responsibility, however slight, could alone teach them. But in effect the result was very different. For one essential fact had been overlooked. Though the Occupation itself was brought about by the Arabi rebellion, the control which we then assumed into our own hands had been only an extension of the Anglo-French control imposed with the consent of other Powers a few years before the Occupation in order to curb the autocratic power of the Khediviate, which under Ismail had plunged Egypt into financial ruin and consequent chaos. Any relaxation of British control was therefore almost bound to result in a revival of that autocratic power which represented the ancient order of things in Egypt before the Occupation, and was inevitably bound to do so if the Khedive happened to be, as Abbas was, a man of peculiarly autocratic temperament. It was, however, believed or hoped in England that in any case the representative bodies created by the Organic Statute of 1883 in accordance with Lord Dufferin's recommendations would supply any necessary check. But they were far too inexperienced to play a preponderating part. They were swept off their legs by the rising tide of an extravagant Nationalism, which the Khedive, who had no sympathy with its democratic tendencies, covertly sought, and with no little success, to divert into anti-British channels. He did not mind even if the authority of his own Ministers

suffered when they were presumed to be acting under British inspiration. His personal authority was enhanced.

Yet Sir Eldon Gorst had lost no time in giving an earnest of the British Government's liberal intention by pushing on the scheme already initiated in Lord Cromer's time for the development of local self-government "as the best preparation and education for the ultimate exercise of more responsible functions." The Egyptian Provincial Councils owed their origin to the Organic Law of 1883, and they had fulfilled their principal duty, which was to depute from amongst their own members representatives to the Legislative Council. Their other opportunities of usefulness had been small. In order to meet the most reasonable demands for reform the property qualification was halved for those who held higher education certificates, the official element was reduced, and though the Mudir was to continue as *ex-officio* President of his Provincial Council, the framing of by-laws and the convocation of Council were no longer to be left to his good will. He had henceforth to convoke it on a requisition from one-third of the members. Its powers were enlarged, and most of all in regard to elementary education and trade schools, in which the people had begun to take an active interest, and to some extent in regard to more advanced education. The foreign Capitulations here again hampered reform, as they stood in the way of any general scheme of local taxation, but some tentative financial powers were conferred upon the Councils, who were authorised, subject to the general control of the Ministry of Education, to establish or take over schools and to give grants-in-aid. They were also empowered to appoint managing committees for schools or groups of schools and to co-opt additional members for educational purposes.

It was a distinctly progressive measure, and after lengthy debates in the Legislative Council effect was given to it in a law promulgated in June, 1908. But

it failed to arrest the growing impatience and disaffection of the Legislative Council and the General Assembly, who had begun to clamour for full rights of self-government. At the same time, a violent anti-British feeling displayed itself in the discussion, not only of questions which they were entitled to discuss, but also of international questions which were specifically outside their constitutional province. Under the influence of the Turkish revolution and the less remote inspiration of Abdeen Palace they allowed themselves to be made so clearly the mere tools of an organised campaign against the Occupation that Sir Eldon Gorst was compelled to admit that the attitude he had been instructed to take up in 1907 had failed, and to warn the British Government that "the policy of ruling Egypt in co-operation with native Ministers was incompatible with that of encouraging the development of so-called representative institutions." Had he added "so long as the Khedive Abbas is the head of the State," the statement would have been unimpeachable.

Sir Eldon, however, was already a dying man, and was very soon compelled to retire. The mere appointment of Lord Kitchener to succeed him had an immediately sobering effect upon all parties. As the Sirdar of the Egyptian army and the victor of Omdurman, he had left a great reputation behind him which his subsequent career had further enhanced, and the Khedive had not forgotten the unpleasant consequences to himself that had attended his rash attempt to try a fall with him shortly after his accession to the Khediviate. Lord Kitchener, who had a sentimental side to him of which the public, looking upon him only as the strong, stern man, knew very little, was really fond of Egypt and of the Egyptians, and especially of the *fellaheen*, whom he had turned into very serviceable soldiers. Having in former times accomplished the feat, deemed impossible by most people, of fashioning an Egyptian army out of such unpromising materials, he was now prepared to

take on the equally difficult task of fashioning the political life of the Egyptian people. The relative calm that supervened on his arrival in Cairo was more apparent than real, but he himself believed in its reality sufficiently to initiate a much larger measure of constitutional reform than Sir Eldon Gorst's Provincial Councils Bill. The Organic Law of 1913 represented a really big advance on the Organic Law of 1883.

It did not touch the recently enlarged powers and duties of the Provincial Councils, but it separated them definitely from the one legislative body into which the earlier Legislative Council and Provincial Assembly were now merged. This new body, styled the Legislative Assembly, consisted of a much larger proportion of elected members (sixty-six) returned by indirect suffrage and of a much smaller one of members (seventeen) nominated by Government, and nominated solely for the purpose of securing the representation of minorities and of interests which might otherwise have been unrepresented. It remained, however, essentially a consultative and deliberative body, with no power over the Executive except in restraint of any increase of direct taxation, and to the subjects hitherto excluded from discussion were specifically added all questions affecting the relations between Egypt and foreign countries, and—to meet the Khedive's wishes—the Civil List. But the proceedings were made public, and new or increased powers were given to the Assembly to delay legislation, to compel Ministers to justify their persistence in passing any legislation of which the popular body disapproved, to initiate measures on its own responsibility, and to elicit information and give its opinion on all matters of administrative policy. The Egyptian legislation of 1913 moved in many ways on the same lines as the India Councils Act of 1909, which carried the well-known Morley-Minto reforms into effect. Lord Kitchener, who had shown his interest in the poorest class of the *fellaheen* by the enactment of the "Five

Feddan" Law in restraint of village usury, thought to create a moderate party out of the smaller landowning class, which is the backbone of the country. Even the first session, however, was not very encouraging, but Lord Kitchener remained hopeful. He had begun to see through Abbas II, and he realised that a great part of the political mischief in Egypt had been due to the revival of the autocratic power of the Khedive, whom he himself, like his predecessor, had too long humoured.

The Khedive had played his cards with undeniable astuteness, and for a long time circumstances had favoured him. For he had been able at first to play off the two sections into which the new Nationalist party was divided against each other, and both ultimately against us. When Lord Cromer left Egypt, one section consisted of the more moderate representatives of the newly educated classes and of notables and landowners who were ready to unite with them in resisting a revival of the old autocratic methods to which the Occupation had set a term. To that extent they accepted British control, though they wanted a larger share for Egyptians in the conduct of public affairs. This section was known as the "*hasb-el-oumm*" or "popular" party. The other section, which called itself the "*hasb-el-watan*" or "patriotic" party, was much more aggressive. It was bitterly anti-British and to some extent Pan-Islamic, and looked to Constantinople for support. Its first leader had been Mustapha Kamel, whose mantle after his death fell on to Mohamed Ferid. Both were men of great eloquence and magnetism. Its organ, the *Lewa*, conducted with no little ability a relentless campaign against the Occupation. The "popular party" had received a good deal of encouragement from Lord Cromer, who had prevailed on the Prime Minister, Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, whom he trusted entirely, to take Saad Zaghlul, one of its most promising members, into the Cabinet. Abbas II hated Zaghlul in consequence almost as much as he had hated Mustapha Pasha

Fehmi, who had had the impertinence to advise him in the early days of his Khediviate "to do nothing without consulting Lord Cromer." The year after Lord Cromer left Egypt Mustapha Fehmi retired on the plea of ill-health, and with him the staunchest believer during more than thirteen years of unselfish service in loyal co-operation in Egypt's best interests with the British controlling power.

The Khedive had now for the first time a considerable share in the formation of the new Cabinet. He deferred to Sir Eldon Gorst, with perhaps Macchiavellian alacrity, in the appointment of Butros Pasha Ghali, a Copt, who had been Minister for Foreign Affairs in the late Cabinet, to be Prime Minister, for to a Mahomedan people the appointment of a Christian to the highest post in the Government is always repugnant. He acquiesced also in the retention of Zaghlul as Minister of Education, and in the nomination of Ismail Pasha Sirri, an able engineer who had served under the great pioneers of irrigation, to be Minister of Public Works. But he got into the very important Ministry of the Interior a man after his own heart in Mohamed Said Pasha, who promptly introduced the apple of discord into the Cabinet. Fifteen months later, in February, 1910, when Butros was murdered by a young Nationalist fanatic, it was Mohamed Said who succeeded him in the Premiership at the Khedive's prompting. Some other Ministers exchanged portfolios and Zaghlul was shifted from the Ministry of Education to that of Justice, where he was far more certain to come some day into direct collision with the Khedive, and in 1912 he was, in fact, driven to resign.

The "patriotic" or extremist section of the Nationalist party, secretly backed by the Khedive for the purpose, had by that time killed the "popular" or more moderate section, who had ceased under the new dispensation to receive the British support which Lord Cromer had encouraged them to expect. Many of its former members

either gave up politics in disgust, or joined hands in the bitterness of their hearts with the more advanced party, as Zaghlul did when, after his resignation, he entered the first Legislative Assembly elected under the new Organic Law and was chosen by it to be its only non-official Vice-President. Some among this more extreme party were, however, like Zaghlul, anti-Khedivial rather than anti-British, and their hostility to the Occupation was largely due to the acquiescence of the British control in the revival of many of the old abuses of Khedivial autocracy—an acquiescence which they regarded as a betrayal of the Cromer tradition and of themselves. Meanwhile the "patriotic" section of the Nationalist party had itself been broken up into two factions. For when once it had fulfilled the main purpose for which it had been originally favoured by Abbas and destroyed the "popular" party, it lost its chief usefulness in the eyes of the Khedive, who began in turn to be alarmed at the very intimate relations entertained by some of its members with the most advanced wing of the "Young Turk" Committee of Union and Progress. A crisis had already occurred in 1911, when some of the Egyptian extremists had to fly to Constantinople, whilst others saved themselves by making their submission to the Khedive and forming a new "Khedivial" group of their own.

The time was bound to come when even such a master of Oriental intrigue as Abbas would show his hand too clearly and too often not to exhaust even Lord Kitchener's somewhat cynical tolerance. He skated for years on very thin ice with undeniable adroitness. He felt his way at first cautiously. He had a real personal regard for Sir Eldon Gorst, who had been always inclined to indulge him as a spoilt child since the time of his accession to the Khediviate, and on more than one occasion he showed himself willing to listen to a personal appeal from Sir Eldon to redress some particular act of gross injustice. One of the very few acts of unselfish kindliness which stand to Abbas's credit was the visit which he

paid to Sir Eldon on his death-bed at home. Lord Cromer nevertheless has told us that from conversations he himself had with Sir Eldon shortly before his death "his honeymoon with the Khedive" had approached its close before he left Cairo. It was part of the tragedy of his premature death that time was not allowed him to undo the mischievous results of a policy for which he was not primarily responsible, as it had been imposed upon him from home under a curious misconception of its almost inevitable consequences. Abbas, who could be extremely plausible and even agreeable when he liked, put on his best manners when Lord Kitchener first arrived, and Lord Kitchener was himself at pains to show the Khedive that he bore him no malice for their former differences. So for some time, just as he made light of the extremists' plots against his own life, Lord Kitchener continued to treat the intrigues of the Khedive and of his creatures with a somewhat contemptuous indifference so long as any vital British interests or the particular spheres of Egyptian administration in which he himself took a special interest were not seriously affected. When they were, as, for instance, when he discovered that the Khedive proposed to sell the Mariut railway, constructed mainly for the development of one of his own estates, to the Banco di Roma, acting, it was believed, on German account, he did not hesitate to put his foot down very heavily.

One of the most ill-advised concessions made to Abbas was to leave him complete discretion in the bestowal of titles and decorations. He trafficked in them unblushingly, selling them for money down or conferring them upon his obsequious tools. He quite openly professed a far greater admiration for his grandfather, the Khedive Ismail, whose misrule had brought Egypt to ruin, than for his far more respectable father, the Khedive Tewfik, who never forgot what his dynasty owed to the British occupation and never refused his loyal co-operation to the British controlling power.

But in one way he was very unlike Ismail, for he was an astute and very grasping man of business, and he ran his large estates himself and distinctly for profit. He was quick to seize any opportunity of making money. For instance, Lord Kitchener having on one occasion dropped a hint to him that he ought to visit the provinces more often, so as to show himself to his subjects, he promptly let it be known, through suitable channels, that he was about to make a progress through the country and would do the chief notables and landowners the honour of a visit to their estates if they made it worth his while. He came back to Cairo some £40,000 to the good. The malversation of funds in the Wakf Department which administered under the Khedive's sole control the very large trust funds placed under the illusory protection of Mahomedan Pious Foundations became such a crying scandal that Lord Kitchener had to insist in 1913 on a revival of a separate Ministry to take charge of that department, as had been the practice in former times. Covetous as he was, Abbas always professed to be in financial straits, and doubtless much of his wealth went to provide the sinews of the underground war he was ceaselessly waging against the British in Cairo, in Constantinople, and elsewhere. Though he was almost universally hated, for he was capable of the pettiest meanness and cruelty, he was a power in the land, for he was feared.

The first session of the new Legislative Council elected under the Organic Statute of 1913 was a great disappointment to Lord Kitchener. The elections themselves had passed off quietly and the results on the face of them had seemed to justify his expectations. A large majority consisted of respectable landowners personally known to the voters, and carpet-baggers met with scant success. With Saad Zaghlul, who had several years' experience of Ministerial responsibility, and another distinguished lawyer, Abdul Aziz Bey Fehmi, to play the part of legitimate opposition, there seemed some reason to hope

that there would be no repetition of the purely factious spirit displayed by the old Legislative Council and General Assembly. In the last of his annual Reports from Cairo for the year 1913, Lord Kitchener wrote that the success of the recent constitutional reform would depend upon one factor and one only, namely, the spirit in which it was carried out. If the new Assembly co-operated loyally and earnestly with the Government for the good of the people of Egypt, it would mark an important step along the path of true progress. "If, on the other hand, outside influence and foolish counsels prevail, and the Assembly indulges in unjustified hostility, unseemly bickering, and futile attempts to extend its own personal importance, . . . not only will it destroy itself, but it will convince all reasonable men that Egypt is not for the present fitted for those representative institutions which are now on their trial."

Unfortunately, when the new Assembly met, it was the "outside influence and foolish counsels" which Lord Kitchener had deprecated that once more prevailed. The preliminary question of the Standing Orders engrossed most of its attention and time, and served as a pretext for interminable and angry discussions which betrayed the bitter antagonism between the Prime Minister and Zaghlul. The latter carried the Assembly with him, but he showed then, as he was to show afterwards as leader of the Party of Independence, that with all his forensic ability he lacked the qualities of judgment and discrimination between essentials and non-essentials that are required of a statesman. Abdul Aziz Bey Fehmi failed for much the same reasons. The first part of the session was barren of any useful or important legislation. But if it did little credit to the Assembly, it entirely discredited the Prime Minister, who had himself outlived the Khedive's favour. For Mohamed Said had already had more than one hint that Lord Kitchener's attitude towards Abbas was stiffening, and the counsels of discretion which he began to urge on his august master

were unpalatable. Mohamed Said fell, but the Khedive gained nothing by the change, as it was Hussein Rushdi Pasha who succeeded him and remained Prime Minister throughout the war, after as well as before Abbas was deposed.

Lord Kitchener realised, not for the first time, where the real source of mischief lay. It was hopeless to reform the Khedive, and so long as he occupied the dominant position which he had steadily regained during the second phase of the Occupation at our expense as well as at the expense of his own people, there could be no real progress, but only retrogression in the very task which British policy had assigned to itself in relaxing British control. Not under such a ruler as Abbas could the Egyptians ever have a chance of learning even the elements of self-government. His religion sat light upon him, but he was quite ready to mobilise for his own ends the forces of Mahomedan fanaticism, and not the least of his achievements was to manœuvre himself under the guise of a reformer into a position of supreme authority over the ulemas and grand ulemas of the University of El Azhar before whose *fetwas* the rulers of Egypt had in olden times trembled. With all the despotic instincts of an Abdul Hamid, whom he courted as long as he reigned in Constantinople, he was just as ready to come to terms with the Committee of Union and Progress after the Turkish revolution. A Turk at heart, imbued with the contempt so common amongst all Turco-Egyptians for the *fellaheen*, as they are apt to call all who are of unmixed Egyptian descent, he contrived to rob Egyptian Nationalism of its best elements by instilling into it an anti-foreign and more specifically anti-British virus. Brought up in Vienna to despise Parliamentary institutions and to believe in the divine right of kings and Khedives, he succeeded in perverting the immature representative bodies we had called into existence in Egypt, and lest they should grow to be a check upon his own arbitrary tendencies, he

incited them to waste their nascent energies on vain denunciation of the British controlling power, that alone stood between them and the revival of the old methods of Khedivial misrule from which Egypt had been rescued by British intervention.

So when Lord Kitchener left Cairo for England in the early summer of 1914 he went home determined to get the Khedive's claws effectively clipped, and, should he prove recalcitrant, to face the necessity of removing him. The war brought Lord Kitchener's great career to a tragic close, and Abbas made an end of himself as Khedive by throwing off the mask he had so long and too successfully worn and siding openly with our enemies when the war broke out. But the mischief he had done remained, and if for reasons inherent to the system itself, or from the general tendency of a bureaucracy to supineness and self-satisfied arrogance, the second phase of the Occupation was marked by an appreciable deterioration in the quality of British control, it was the sinister influence of the Khedive Abbas that more than anything else cast a blight upon it.

The Great War came and found the machine ill-prepared for the tremendous strain that was to be put upon it. As long as the war lasted martial law supplied a driving power which, however baneful were the after-effects, kept it going under the highest conceivable pressure. It was not till the war was over that it plainly displayed internal signs of collapse.

KUMBAKONAM.

CHAPTER VII

EGYPT DURING THE WAR

When war broke out between Great Britain and Germany on August 4th, 1914, Abbas Hilmi was in Constantinople. He had been quite aware when he left Cairo in the early summer that he had at last exhausted Lord Kitchener's patience, and he knew that, unless the power of Great Britain was broken, he was in grave danger of forfeiting the Khediviate. His sympathies and co-operation were secured in advance to all our enemies. As was the custom in his absence, the Prime Minister, who was Hussein Rushdi Pasha, acted as Regent. His Cabinet, which had only been recently formed after the resignation of Mohamed Said Pasha, was a relatively strong one, and on the whole well disposed towards the British controlling power. It included men of considerable capacity, such as Adli, Serwat, Serri, Yusuf Wahba, and Ismail Sidki. Their paths were ultimately to diverge, and Ismail Sidki, perhaps the ablest of them all, who afterwards joined Saad Zaghlul's party and became a member of the Nationalist Delegation to Europe, had to resign early in 1915 in consequence of a deplorable domestic scandal. This was the most important of the few changes which occurred in the composition of the Cabinet, and Rushdi continued to preside over it all through the war and for the first few months after the Armistice.

It would have been well if there had been the same

continuity of *personnel* at the British Residency. Mr. (afterwards Sir Milne) Cheetham, who was Councillor, had been left in charge in the usual course when Lord Kitchener went home on leave before the war, and he continued to carry on for several months after Lord Kitchener had gone to the War Office on the outbreak of hostilities. Sir Henry MacMahon, an able officer of the Indian Political Department, who had been Foreign Secretary in India, but was on leave in England, was sent out, on Lord Kitchener's recommendation, to Cairo as High Commissioner after the Proclamation of the Protectorate. But barely two years later he was somewhat abruptly recalled, and Sir Reginald Wingate, who had been Sirdar and Governor of the Sudan for nearly two decades, was appointed to succeed him. Sir Henry MacMahon had no knowledge at all of Egypt, and though Sir Reginald Wingate had served in Cairo during his earlier years in the Egyptian army and kept to some extent in touch with Egypt from Khartum, the conditions he came back to as High Commissioner must have been almost as unfamiliar to him as they had been to Sir Henry MacMahon. Moreover, the administrative machinery of which they in turn took charge was already out of gear, and their own authority was more and more cast into the shade by the military authority which, as the war dragged on, took things more and more into its own hands. Worst of all, neither of them seems to have ever enjoyed the real confidence of the Foreign Office, as they were both new to diplomacy, and their advice, even when, as the event may have ultimately shown, it was sound, never apparently carried enough weight to command consideration amidst the conflicting views of the different Departments and the many grave preoccupations of the War Cabinet. The very fact that, to the surprise of many, Egypt during the war gave very little trouble led to a careless over-confidence for which we had to pay after the war was over.

From the day war was declared between Great Britain

and Germany the Egyptian Government acted as if Egypt was practically part of the British Empire and therefore itself at war with Germany, and as early as August 6th, 1914, on the ground that "the presence of the British Army of Occupation in Egypt renders the country liable to attack by the enemies of His Britannic Majesty," the Prime Minister published a "Decision" of the Council of Ministers that, amongst other war measures, German ships in Egyptian ports were henceforth to be dealt with as enemy ships. Such action obviously implied a definite repudiation of Turkish suzerainty by Egypt, as Turkey, on the contrary, had proclaimed her neutrality and did not openly depart from it for another three months. No immediate breach ensued, as the Porte professed, for the time being, to accept the assurances of the British Government that "neither in Egypt nor elsewhere would the war be used as a pretext for any action injurious to Ottoman interests."

For the rest, the outbreak of hostilities, so long as they were confined to the European continent, produced less excitement in Egypt than had been generally anticipated. There was an undercurrent of hostility towards us amongst the more aggressive Nationalists, and Mahomedan feeling swung more and more towards the German Emperor, who had lavished so many ostentatious professions of friendship upon the Sultan and Khalif, as the probability of active co-operation between those two potentates increased. But most people were more concerned with the effects of the war upon the Egyptian produce markets and the general curtailment of trade with Europe. A great wave of prosperity had been suddenly arrested, and no one at that time foresaw that the period of economic depression was to be of short duration, and that the war was ultimately to pour fresh and undreamt-of wealth into Egypt.

It was only after the Sultan had finally thrown in his lot with the Central Powers that Great Britain pro-

ceeded explicitly to sever the formal ties which still united Egypt to the Ottoman Empire. The Proclamation of Martial Law and the establishment of a very rigid censorship at the beginning of November were the first symptoms of the gravity of the situation that was to be created by a rupture with Constantinople. The British Protectorate was not proclaimed till December 18th, and on the following day another Proclamation announced that His Majesty's Government had deposed the Khedive Abbas II and conferred the rulership of Egypt on Hussein, a son of the Khedive Ismail, with the title of Sultan. After very nearly four centuries, Egypt ceased to form part even nominally of the Ottoman Dominions, and the "veiled" Protectorate exercised by Great Britain for thirty-eight years was transformed by the end of 1914 into an open Protectorate.

What were the precise advantages of making at that moment a change which did not materially alter the situation in Egypt itself, where our dominant position, plus martial law, already gave us a free hand, has not yet been authoritatively explained. The chief argument in support of it is that the Regent and his colleagues found themselves placed in a very difficult position from the point of view of constitutional law. They had been willing to carry on whilst the Ottoman Empire remained neutral, and to assume the sanction of the Khedive for measures still formally taken in his name and under the authority delegated by him to the Regent before he left for Constantinople, so long as Turkey, where he had taken up his quarters, was not actually an enemy country. Now, however, that polite fiction could no longer be maintained, or at any rate the Egyptian Ministers were reluctant to assume the responsibility of maintaining it. This may well have seemed a sufficient argument to the British authorities on the spot, who naturally disliked the prospect of a Ministerial crisis, involving the resignation of the Regent, in addition to all the difficult military problems raised by Turkey's entry into the war.

But the British Government, it may be suggested, might have met it by simply deposing the Khedive, who had deserted his country, and confirming the Regency of the Prime Minister for the duration of the war. This would have been no more arbitrary an exercise of their authority than either annexation or the proclamation of a Protectorate, and it would not have reacted so detrimentally as did the proclamation of a Protectorate upon our relations with our Allies and other neutral States. That was a measure hard to reconcile with the spirit of the reciprocal engagement already taken at our instance by the Entente Powers, that no territorial changes in favour of any one of them should become effective till the end of the war, when they should be discussed and settled by common agreement. For the proclamation of the Protectorate constituted a change in the status of Egypt, as hitherto established by international treaties, and a change to our own advantage. We were able to secure the acquiescence of France and Russia, as we were prepared to promise Syria to the former and the possession of Constantinople and the Straits to the latter. But it helped to embark the Allies on that dangerous course of secret agreements and treaties which led to so many misunderstandings, during as well as after the war. In the course of a semi-official mission on which I was sent by the Foreign Office to the Balkans in the summer of 1915, I had abundant opportunities of noting how serious an obstacle the prospect of Russia being established at Constantinople was to Entente diplomacy in Athens, Sofia, and Bukarest, and how general was the belief that it was the price we had been selfishly willing to pay at their expense for the permanent possession of Egypt. The only doubt, however, that appears to have arisen in London was whether His Majesty's Government should not proceed a step further and annex Egypt to the British Empire instead of merely proclaiming a British Protectorate. Lord Curzon has stated in the House of Lords that "the opportunity of incorporating

Egypt in the Empire was deliberately and in his opinion wisely rejected, because it was intended in the wide latitude which the formula of a Protectorate affords to give free scope to the political aspirations and self-governing capacities of the Egyptian people." It is a strange argument in the mouth of a member of the British Cabinet, which was at that very moment introducing a Government of India Bill of which the avowed purpose in regard to India, though India is certainly "incorporated in the Empire," was exactly the same as that which, according to him, could not have been achieved in Egypt if incorporation in the Empire had been preferred to a Protectorate.

Nothing was said of such a purpose in the two Proclamations which intimated to the Egyptian people that Great Britain had taken charge of Egypt and given her a new ruler. Nor was it easy to read such a purpose into the much lengthier Note addressed to the new Sultan by Mr. Cheetham, who was still acting as the representative of the British Government in Cairo. The Note began by showing how "a band of unscrupulous adventurers" in Constantinople had deliberately provoked a rupture between Turkey and Great Britain, and how the Khedive Abbas Hilmi had definitely thrown in his lot with the King's enemies. Hence "the rights over Egypt whether of the Sultan or of the late Khedive are forfeit to His Majesty." Of those rights the British Government "regard themselves as trustees for the inhabitants of Egypt," and they had decided that "Great Britain can best fulfil the responsibilities she has incurred towards Egypt" by declaring the Protectorate, and by inviting "the Prince of the family of Mehemet Ali most worthy to occupy the position" to undertake the government of the country "under such Protectorate." Great Britain accepted "the fullest responsibility" for the defence of Egyptian territories "against all aggression whencesoever coming," and all Egyptian subjects, "wherever they may be," would be "entitled to receive the protection of His Majesty's Government." The British Represen-

tative in Cairo would henceforth take charge of the relations between the Egyptian Government and the representatives of foreign Powers. The Note further placed it on record that the Capitulations "are no longer in harmony with the development of the country," though their revision would be most conveniently postponed till the end of the war. In the paragraph dealing with "the field of internal administration" it was stated that: "it has been the aim of His Majesty's Government, while working through and in the closest association with the constituted Egyptian Authorities, to secure individual liberty, to promote the spread of education, to further the development of the natural resources of the country, and, in such measure as the degree of enlightenment of public opinion may permit, to associate the governed in the task of government. Not only is it the intention of His Majesty's Government to remain faithful to such policy, but they are convinced that the clearer definition of Great Britain's position in the country will accelerate progress towards self-government."

The Note concluded with an assurance that "the religious convictions of Egyptian subjects will be scrupulously respected," and that "His Majesty's Government are animated by no hostility towards the Khalifate," to which past history showed the loyalty of Egyptian Mahomedans to have been quite independent of any political bonds between Egypt and Constantinople.

This Note was doubtless quite suitably drawn for a diplomatic chancery, but not for a more unsophisticated public. Had it been translated into more popular language and widely circulated, it might have done something to allay the not unnatural apprehensions of a people, alien to us in race and religion, who found their destinies settled for them suddenly without any warning or consultation. But nothing of the kind was done, whilst a great deal, on the other hand, was done to lend colour to the sinister interpretation which our ill-wishers hastened to place upon the Protectorate.

Compare for a moment what we did in Egypt during the war and what we did in India. The genuine enthusiasm with which the princes and people of India rallied to the cause of the Empire elicited at once a generous response both in Simla and in London. Lord Hardinge rightly gauged the feelings both of the Indian Army and the Indian people when he urged that the Indian Expeditionary Force should be dispatched straight to France to fight shoulder to shoulder with the British troops, and to fill during the critical winter months of 1914–1915 a gap which until our new armies and those of the Dominions were ready to take the field could not have been filled from any other quarter. Later on, in Gallipoli, in Mesopotamia, in Syria, Indian troops, Mahomedans as well as Hindus, played a conspicuous part in every campaign against Turkey. The Viceroy's Legislative Council and the Provincial Legislative Councils, as the recognised bodies through which—subject as they were to many limitations—Indian opinion found constitutional expression, were drawn into constant consultation, and they associated themselves with, and sometimes took the initiative in, the various measures deemed necessary by the Government of India for the successful conduct of the war—even a Defence of India Act as drastic as our own Defence of the Realm Act. Great Britain reciprocated by giving India access, for the first time, on a footing of equality with the self-governing Dominions and the United Kingdom itself, to the councils of the Empire at the Imperial War Conferences held in London and ultimately at the Paris Peace Conference. It was during the war that an Indian was first called to the House of Lords, and Lord Sinha with the Maharajah of Bikanir, a Rajput prince who had seen war service himself, signed on behalf of India the historic Peace Treaty of Versailles. More than that, Mr. Asquith, when he was still Prime Minister, had announced that India's loyalty required the problem of Indian governance to be approached from a new angle of vision, and in the very middle of the

war, the momentous declaration of August 20th, 1917, was made on behalf of His Majesty's Government in Parliament, that the object of British policy was to give Indians a greatly enlarged share in the conduct of their own affairs and lead them by gradual stages to the final goal of self-government within the Empire. Nor was any time lost in giving effect to that declaration. The Secretary of State, Mr. Montagu, himself proceeded to India for the purpose, and jointly with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, drew up an exhaustive Report which served as a basis for a new Government of India Bill. As soon as it had been introduced into Parliament, it was referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses, who spent several months in taking exhaustive evidence, including that of Indians, some of whom represented even the most extreme schools of Indian political thought. In the last days of 1919 the Bill, amended and substantially improved by the Committee, passed into law. A stirring message from the King-Emperor brought home to the princes and people of India that they had not shared in vain in the Empire's great struggle for liberty.

Opinions may differ, and do differ very widely, as to the details of this very far-reaching Reform Bill and as to many other issues raised by recent British policy in India. The unabated hostility of Indian extremists and the ugly storm that broke over the Punjab have tended to discourage the perhaps over-sanguine expectations raised by the great wave of enthusiasm which swept over India in the early part of the war. Nor must the Indian analogy be carried too far. There were many things we were able to do in India which it would have been obviously impossible to do in Egypt. India had long been an integral part of the British Empire. It was not till the war that Great Britain had claimed any paramount rights over Egypt. But the importance of reconciling the Egyptian people to their new relationship with the Empire might well have inspired the British

Government to shape their policy in Egypt, *mutatis mutandis*, on the same broad and sympathetic lines as their Indian policy. The very reverse took place. The methods adopted in Egypt and the spirit in which they were carried out were as the exact antithesis of those by which India was brought during the war, and through the war, into closer communion with the Empire.

Sultan Hussein, on assuming his new functions under the Protectorate, had at once requested the Egyptian Prime Minister to continue in office. In a letter setting forth the circumstances in which he had himself deemed it "a duty to Egypt and to our glorious ancestor, the great Mehemet Ali, whose dynasty we desire to perpetuate" to respond to the appeal made to him by the British Government, he declared himself openly in favour of representative institutions by expressing his own wish "to associate the people more and more closely with the government of the country," adding that to that end he was assured of receiving the most sympathetic support from the British Government, and that "the more precise definition of Great Britain's position in Egypt, by removing all causes of misunderstanding, will facilitate the collaboration of all the political elements in the country."

Hussein Rushdi, hitherto Regent, remained Prime Minister, and the rest of the Cabinet continued in office. There is no reason to doubt that at that time they loyally accepted the Protectorate, and if they and the Sultan himself regarded it as essentially a war measure, that reservation was not placed on record and can hardly even be read into His Highness's reference to "the more precise definition of Great Britain's position in Egypt," which might well be interpreted to mean that which had just taken place through the Proclamation of the Protectorate. They gave a still more striking proof of their desire to take their full share in the prosecution of the war if, as the Egyptians still assert, they offered

Great Britain the active co-operation of the Egyptian army. That this offer was ever made, or at any rate that it ever took formal shape, is now disputed in British official quarters. Anyhow, whether or not it was made and declined, General Sir John Maxwell, commanding the British forces in Egypt, had already issued, immediately after the rupture with Turkey, a Proclamation which, after announcing the existence of a state of war between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire, stated that though "the British were now fighting to protect the rights and liberties of Egypt which were originally won upon the battlefield by Mehemet Ali" and to secure the continuance of the peace and prosperity which she had enjoyed during the thirty years of the British Occupation, Great Britain nevertheless, "recognising the respect and veneration with which the Sultan is regarded by the Mahomedans of Egypt, takes upon herself the sole burden of the present war without calling upon the Egyptian people for aid therein," merely requiring them in return not to hamper our military operations nor to render aid to the enemy.

The material value of Egyptian co-operation in the field would probably have been slight, as the greater part of the army, which was only about 30,000 strong altogether, was required since the reconquest of the Sudan for garrison duties in that remote and far-stretched dependency. But would not the moral effect have been worth taking into account? Having thrown cold water on any good will which a generous appeal to Egyptian co-operation might have elicited, we never even carried out the promise we had so loftily given that we should not call upon the Egyptian people for aid in the war! Far from doing so, we frequently used Egyptian officers and soldiers on the Suez Canal, in the Hedjaz, in Syria, and, in fact, wherever and whenever we found it convenient to do so, and before the end of the war we imposed, directly and indirectly, many heavy burdens upon the Egyptian people. In other respects, in fact, than actual

fighting power, Egypt's contribution to the war can challenge comparison with that of many other parts of the British Empire, though she was never given the chance of gaining credit for conscious and voluntary sacrifice. It is sometimes argued that she would never have gained such credit if it had been left to her free will to decide what contribution she should make, but it is hardly an argument we are justified in using, since the fiction was always maintained, however little it ultimately corresponded to the facts, that compulsion was never applied to Egyptians in regard to any war services they rendered. Not once during the war were the legislative bodies created to give limited opportunities of constitutional expression to Egyptian public opinion allowed to meet, or given an opportunity of associating themselves publicly with the many measures actually taken by the Sultan and his Ministers in furtherance of the war. Nowhere was the censorship more rigorous and, according to most people, more unintelligent. Yet on the whole, and even in the towns, the new *régime* had been accepted without any outward manifestations of disaffection.

Amongst the Mahomedan population of Cairo, over which such a powerful centre of Mahomedan orthodoxy as the University of El Azhar always exercises a great influence, as well as amongst the younger Pan-Islamic and Nationalist parties who had been in fairly close touch of recent years with the Young Turks of Constantinople, Great Britain doubtless had few well-wishers. In the first months of the war, the prospect of a Turkish invasion could hardly fail to create some popular excitement. A Turkish army was known to be concentrating in Syria in order to move against the Suez Canal, and if possible sever our communications through that vital waterway with India and Australia. But the excitement subsided as soon as the attack was foiled in the early days of February, 1915—when, by the way, Egyptian artillery played an extremely useful part in the defence of the Canal—and Turks were marched into Cairo as

prisoners instead of entering it as conquerors. Many Egyptians may have continued to believe in the ultimate triumph of Turkey's Germanic allies, and abundant assurances came from Constantinople that Egypt would then be restored to Turkey, who would in turn grant her complete independence. But such faith as they may originally have placed in the Turkish armies being able to drive us out of Egypt died steadily away as they saw their country converted into a huge British military base and an endless stream of British units pouring in from India and Australia and New Zealand. Gradually, too, Sultan Hussein's great personal qualities enabled him to overcome the unpopularity he had at first incurred by the acceptance of a title which in itself jarred upon Mahomedan ears accustomed to associate it with the Ottoman Sultans, who were also Khalifs, from the hands of an alien and non-Mahomedan Power. Sultan Hussein was universally respected, and amongst the rural population he had acquired a great reputation as an excellent landlord and an expert farmer. He was also a *grand seigneur* and was known for his liberality—two very important assets in an Oriental country. I had known him for many years and saw a good deal of him when I passed through Cairo on my way back from India in the spring of 1915, and whilst nothing struck me more than the absolute faith he had in the triumph sooner or later of the Allied cause, he did not underrate the difficulties of his situation nor the distrust which the silence of the British Government was already causing as to the ultimate consequences of the Protectorate. He himself, though he did not actually say so, seemed to have accepted it as an essential war measure, and his purpose was to proceed in person to London as soon as the war was over and effect a settlement with the British Government which would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of his people. It must be acknowledged, too, that we did not take much trouble to help him, and, though it was clearly in our interest to enhance as far as possible in the eyes of

his people the prestige of the ruler we had placed on the throne with the new and higher title of Sultan, he did not disguise from me his mortification at being sometimes treated with less ceremonial deference than had been usually shown to the Khedives. Very unfortunately, on October 9th, 1917, Sultan Hussein, who had been failing for some months, died, and his brother, Ahmed Fuad, was hastily chosen by the British Government to succeed him, not it would seem because he possessed any special qualifications, but because, having very few friends in the country, he would be compelled to lean upon us alone for support.

Had the war been of shorter duration the mistakes made at the outset might have been perhaps easily repaired. But the longer it endured the more completely did military authority overshadow civil authority; and the one officer, Sir John Maxwell, whose long experience of Egypt and whose popularity with Egyptians of all classes went a long way to mitigate the harshness of martial law, had been removed in the second year of the war. The time came too when, in order to secure the success of new operations on a very large scale against Turkey in Palestine and Syria, the assurances originally given by the British Government that the Egyptian people would not be called upon for aid in the war, of which Great Britain had taken upon herself the sole burden, had to be considerably watered down in practice. Egypt was the base of those operations. New railway lines had to be laid with the utmost speed across the desert from the Suez Canal to the old Turkish frontier, and then pushed on again as fast as possible into Turkish territory as our advance progressed. No labour was available except Egyptian labour. At the same time, the expeditionary force, which grew into a large army, as well as the forces in Egypt itself, had to be kept constantly supplied and fed, and the dearth of shipping and the growing submarine danger in the Mediterranean made it imperative to supply and feed them as far as possible

from Egypt itself. There was every intention at first to pay handsomely for everything we required from the Egyptians, and to induce Egyptian labour to volunteer by the offer of attractive terms. But in practice those excellent intentions were ultimately frustrated by the increasing exigencies of the war, and very heavy burdens were forcibly imposed upon Egypt, which unfortunately fell chiefly on that section of the population that had been least affected by the political agitation against the British controlling power before the war.

The sudden fall in prices which, in Egypt as elsewhere, followed the outbreak of war had hit the *fellaheen* very hard, but measures were taken to avert a panic, and within a year the pendulum had swung right away in the other direction, and prices for all agricultural produce soared steadily to heights never dreamt of before. The lion's share of profits went to the large landowners. They at once screwed up the rents of their tenants, a large proportion of whom had always remained, and preferred to remain, yearly tenants. But on the whole the *fellaheen* themselves waxed fat, as has been shown by the astonishing rapidity with which they began to repay the loans granted to them by the Agricultural Bank and other institutions. About the war itself they for a long time knew little and cared less, though it furnished not unwelcome material for wild rumours and blood-curdling stories. They have so hated the Turks from times immemorial that even the religious appeal of their Khalif at Constantinople did not stir them deeply. It was none the less an extraordinary piece of folly on our part to make in a Mahomedan country repeated collections, which, under pressure from the local authorities, became really compulsory levies, for the Red Cross, as the mere name lent itself to easy misrepresentation and was in fact suspected of covering some mysterious purpose of sectarian propaganda. But the *fellaheen* had been told officially that they would not be made to suffer in any way by the war, and as they were beginning

to make money, they were generally speaking content to leave it at that, and even the Protectorate and the dethronement of the Khedive made little impression on them, as, to them, Sultan Hussein was well known as an excellent landlord and agricultural expert. They grumbled a little when, at the time of the Gallipoli expedition, the army began to place large contracts for clover and hay in the hands of Greek and other contractors, who bought up the Egyptian supplies at low prices and made huge profits for themselves. But the civil authorities redressed this first grievance by taking the purchase into their own hands and paying liberal prices direct to the *fellaheen* themselves, Gradually, however, in 1917 and 1918, under increasing war pressure, the question of army supplies assumed a different complexion. They became practically forced contributions. Those who had the stuff to supply had little cause for complaint except that payments were often slow to reach them or melted away in transit. But the small *fellah* who had not sufficient barley, or hay, or chopped straw of his own to provide the quota demanded of him had to buy it at ruinous prices from his more fortunate neighbours, who, it was often suspected, had friends at court and themselves got off lightly. Worse still was it when, in November, 1917, his precious beasts of burden, his donkeys and his camels, began to be requisitioned for army transport. They were hired, it is true, at reasonable rates, but nothing could fully make up for the loss of them, and even if he ultimately received compensation for those that were lost during the war, it was calculated, not on the very much higher prices at which he could alone replace them, but on the original valuation.

The most serious trouble of all came with the recruitment of the Labour Corps in Egypt. It was started in the summer of 1915 for participation in the operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula, as an adjunct to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, but in an entirely noncombatant capacity. Its object was to furnish wholesale

labour of an unskilled description. The conditions of service were such—clothing, food, and 30*s.* a month—as to attract the Egyptian *fellah* in large numbers, particularly at a time when low wages and much unemployment still prevailed. No difficulty was experienced in getting together a large number of men. The recruiting was carried on in the provinces with the assistance of provincial Mudirs and district Mamours and village Omdehs, under the supervision of special "Egyptian Labour Corps" officers, British residents or protected subjects, and sometimes foreigners of Allied nationality, who were collected without much discrimination and very hastily trained.

After Gallipoli, the Corps was brought back to Egypt. Some were sent to France and some to Mesopotamia. Others were sent to the Suez Canal and beyond, when we began to feel our way into the Sinai Peninsula. For trench-digging, the erection of earthworks, road-making, pipe-laying, etc., Egyptians could be freely employed to release our own men for combatant duties. To a fresh appeal early in 1916 the *fellaheen* again responded freely. But before the year was out, and notably after our unfortunate reverse at Katia, a revulsion of feeling took place. Fear had crept into the minds of the labourers, and still more so into the minds of their relatives in the villages. The Corps had been under shell-fire. Men had died whose deaths were not notified by the authorities to their relatives. Typhus had broken out and was making ravages. In the Egyptian villages the Labour Corps suddenly became synonymous with the bottomless pit. That was how the difficulty of enrolling fresh recruits arose, though a great number of those who had already served were still willing to re-enlist of their own free will. The authorities failed to deal squarely with the situation. Had they frankly adopted a system of conscription to which the people were already accustomed in the Egyptian army, and had they seen to it that it was fairly enforced all round, not nearly so much harm

uld have been done. But the fiction of volunteering s kept up, whilst Mudirs were given to understand at men were required and that no efforts should be ired in getting them. The Mudir transmitted the unction to his Mamours and these in their turn to the ndehs. All through 1917 and 1918 the screw was put more and more severely as the military operations panded and the lines of communication grew longer, experience had proved that there are no better workers an the Egyptians, whether on roads or railway embank-ents. In some places the *fellaheen* began to fly from eir villages, and soldiers and police had to scour the untry to bring the "volunteers" in under escort to labour *dépôts*. The British military authorities eded the men and asked no questions. The British il authorities, harassed and overworked, had lost touch th the people. So many officials had been allowed to to the front or diverted to other kinds of war work, at far too few were available to exercise any control er what was going on in the interior. Such supervision was attempted had to be in most cases entrusted to ung officers, entirely ignorant of the country and the nguage, who could only work through native officialdom, to men picked up in highways and byways who knew ly too well how to work in with native officialdom. d native officialdom, left to itself, was callous or ghtened. The chief anxiety of the higher provincial thorities, even of the better type, was to shuffle respon-ility on to the lower ones, and these in their turn ssed it on to those beneath them. Those of a worse e saw opportunities of gaining *kudos* for zeal with the itish whilst feathering their own nests.

It was in the villages themselves that the worst things ppened. The whole system of village governance in ypt cries out for inquiry and reform. It assumed its sent form under Mehemet Ali, and many Egyptians o have closely studied it maintain that the French del, of which it was a clumsy adaptation, was never

suited to Egyptian conditions. The Omdeh, or village *Maire*, is a Government official. Sometimes he may be a large landowner; or more often he is just an ordinary peasant. In any case he must own ten acres of land, a qualification often acquired by very devious means. There are 3,600 of them in Egypt, and a considerable portion of them are petty tyrants who terrorise their neighbours whilst maintaining themselves in office by pandering in every way to their superiors. It can be imagined what a chance the recruiting of the Labour Corps offered to their cupidity and vindictiveness, and how greedily they availed themselves of it. If the Mamour of the district or the Mudir of the province was not a man to be squared by the usual methods, he was not likely, at any rate, to lay himself open to the suspicion of lukewarmness with the British authorities by obstructing any process of recruitment that yielded good results. And all this could be done, and was done, under shelter of "orders from the English Government."

The Egyptian Labour Corps rendered most valuable services. It was well organised and, having regard to its constitution and the purpose for which it was created, well-officered, at least in the field. It grew continually in size. The information semi-officially published by the British military authorities with regard to the Egyptian Labour and Transport Corps has been meagre. The total strength of the Corps is put down at a much lower figure than the estimate current in Egypt. "The numbers involved," according to a "Record of the Syrian Expedition" printed under authority, "eventually reached a total of 135,000 men engaged on six months' contracts, giving an annual turnover of some 270,000 men, apart from replacement of casualties." But it is not clear whether these figures are meant to include the labour "pools" mentioned as having been established "at the base ports of Alexandria, Port Said, Kantara, and Suez." In 1916, 10,463 men of the Egyptian Labour Corps,

it is stated, were sent to France, and 8,230 to Mesopotamia, whilst at the time of the Armistice there appear to have been just over 100,000, besides about 35,000 assigned to transport and other services, actually employed in connection with the operations in Syria. The casualties in the Labour Corps are not given, but only those in the Camel and Donkey Transport Corps, amounting altogether to 713, of which the great majority were deaths from exposure. In his official despatches from the seat of war, General Allenby paid more than one tribute to the great importance of the services rendered by the Egyptian Labour and Transport Corps and to the excellence of the work done by them. Even if the official methods of calculation do not convey a misleading impression as to the call made in point of numbers from first to last on the people of Egypt, it represents a not inconsiderable percentage of a total male population of less than one and a half million between the age of seventeen and thirty, to which recruitment was chiefly confined. There is, fortunately, no reason to believe that the men were not on the whole well treated in the field and in camp. The tales of widespread cruelty and injustice can be dismissed as untrue. Harsh treatment and even brutality there may have been, but they were, at any rate, the exception, not the rule. The "Gippy" drivers in their blue *galoubiyehs* with their camels and their donkeys were very popular with our men, who knew how often their food and their drinking water itself depended on these transport services in an often waterless and roadless country. With regard to the Labour Corps, the following is another extract from the same "Record": "Those who have seen many thousands of Egyptian Labour Corps labourers on task work, either driving a cutting with pick and fasse through Palestine clay, or in their thousands carrying baskets of earth to pile up some railway embankment, will long remember such examples of intensive labour. No less striking was it to watch the line of laden boats leaving the storeships

off the coast and making their way through the surf to the beach, there to be hauled high up by teams of cheerful Egyptians working to whistle signal under their own officers." At times, particularly in 1917, hospital accommodation and medical treatment were terribly inadequate, but one must remember that Egyptians of the *fellaheen* class have not yet learnt to set much store by such matters, except when they are the actual sufferers, and the very great frequency of re-enlistments, which were certainly voluntary, shows that the Egyptian Labour Corps had few serious grievances at the front.

But what the *fellaheen* as a whole felt and remembered were the methods by which the Corps came to be ultimately recruited in their villages. They quite wrongly ascribed them to the direct orders of the British controlling power, whereas they were just the old methods of indigenous oppression revived by their own officials as soon as the vigilance of the British controlling power was relaxed. But because it was relaxed when it was most needed, we cannot repudiate our responsibility for what happened. When the war came to an end we had certainly clarified the situation in Egypt by proclaiming our Protectorate, but in other ways we had not by any means strengthened our position. Sultan Hussein's premature death had robbed us of the wise and loyal ruler whom we had been fortunate enough to have the opportunity of placing on the throne. Though we had freed Egypt from the last vestiges of Turkish domination, we had done nothing to secure the willing assent of the Egyptians to the new relationship into which we had forcibly brought them with the British Empire. Though we had poured vast amounts of money into the country and the war had ultimately brought unprecedented wealth and prosperity to Egypt as a whole, the people had suffered not only under the many restraints which are almost unavoidably incidental to a state of war, but also some grievous hardships which hit them all the harder in that we had begun by promising them complete

immunity from the burdens of the war. We had done nothing to gain the confidence of the educated classes, whose impatience at the maintenance of even a veiled Protectorate had been steadily increasing even before the war, and we had for the first time profoundly estranged the agricultural masses that form the vast majority of the population.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CLAIM TO "COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE"

THE Armistice and the end of the Great War when it at last came may have taken other people in Egypt somewhat by surprise, but not so the Nationalist party. Indeed some credit must be given to their perspicacity for having realised in good time that, when peace came, the fate of Egypt would be in the hands of the Allied and Associated Powers. They quickly changed their orientation and made a close study of all the utterances of Allied statesmen, and especially of Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson, which could be used in support of Egypt's claim to a full share in the fruits of a victorious war waged for the world's freedom, and to the unfettered exercise of the right of self-determination repeatedly promised to all the small nations. Before the war they had been content to demand self-government and a larger share in the administration of their country. Now "complete independence" was their cry, and an immediate notice to Great Britain to quit. They could fairly claim that they had waited patiently until Great Britain was released from the overwhelming anxieties of war before raising their voices, but they lost no time in doing so as soon as the war was over.

Two days after the Armistice, *i.e.*, on November 13th, 1918, Saad Pasha Zaghlul and some of his friends called at the Residency and in the name of the Egyptian people, whose representatives they declared themselves to be,

laid before the High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, a formal demand for the abolition of the Protectorate and the recognition of the complete independence of Egypt. Sir Reginald Wingate listened to them very courteously, but according to the account of the conversation published in the Nationalist Press, which is probably quite accurate on this point at least, the only reply he was in a position to make was that he was not acquainted with the intentions of His Majesty's Government in regard to the future of Egypt. Zaghlul was doubtless prepared for this reply, for a few days later he asked the High Commissioner to support his request to the military authorities for permission for himself and his colleagues of the Delegation to leave for England, where they wished to place the Egyptian case before the British people. That request was refused after reference to His Majesty's Government, and with less than Sir Reginald's usual tact the refusal was notified, not in a letter from the High Commissioner himself, but in a somewhat curt note from his private secretary. Zaghlul after all had been for several years an Egyptian Minister, and he may be excused for having taken umbrage at the form in which the refusal of a request in itself perfectly legitimate had been conveyed to him by the Residency. He appealed then to higher quarters, and in a series of skilfully argued letters to Mr. Lloyd George, M. Clemenceau, M. Orlando, and President Wilson he adjured each of those statesmen in turn and with increasing vehemence to apply to Egypt, whose invaluable co-operation during the war entitled her to a hearing, the lofty principles they had proclaimed in defining their war aims.

When the Peace Conference met in Paris, the Nationalist Delegation, which henceforth represented the Party of Egyptian Independence, sent to all the Plenipotentiaries an exhaustive Memorandum in which the Nationalist programme was fully set forth. It was a plausible document. It gave a somewhat highly coloured picture of the immense progress made by the Egyptian people in the days of

Mehemet Ali and his successors, which had enabled the Khedive Ismail to boast that "Egypt was no longer in Africa, but was a part of Europe." It passed lightly over the disorders which brought about the British Occupation, but laid stress on the repeated assurances given by Great Britain that the Occupation was to be merely temporary, and, whilst not ignoring altogether the good work done by Englishmen during the Occupation, it dwelt on the disabilities it had imposed upon Egyptians and the damaging effects of an alien tutelage, for which there had ceased to be any excuse, upon the moral and intellectual development of the nation. It enumerated and emphasised the very great services of different kinds which Egypt had rendered to the Allied cause in the prosecution of the war. It denounced the Protectorate as a war-measure which had no moral or legal value, as no attempt had ever been made to obtain for it the consent and approval of the Egyptian people. It went on therefore to formulate the Egyptian demands, which were the recognition and free enjoyment of national independence and of Egypt's full and sole sovereignty over the Sudan as well as over Egypt proper. In return, it promised ample security for the discharge of Egypt's financial obligations and for the rights enjoyed by the foreign communities settled in the country. It affirmed, in conclusion, the unprecedented unanimity with which the Egyptian nation had entrusted its cause to the Delegation, and it registered an indignant protest against the arbitrary action of the British authorities in refusing permission for its members to proceed to Paris in discharge of their mission.

Meanwhile, Egyptian Ministers had begun to grow alarmed at a movement which left them entirely out of account. But they felt just as strongly as the Delegation itself that the time had arrived to press for a definition of the position which Egypt was to occupy now that the war was over and the conditions which had led to the proclamation of the Protectorate had passed

away. An Anglo-Egyptian Commission had been appointed in 1918 at the instance of the Egyptian Prime Minister to report on the constitutional reforms which it was admitted would have to be introduced when peace was restored. All that has been made known to the public in regard to its labours is that Sir William Brunyate, the Judicial Adviser, drew up at the request of the Egyptian Ministers a Note on Constitutional Reform in Egypt, which, though marked "confidential," leaked out and gave great offence. It was almost too much to expect that the Prime Minister would be able or willing to keep it secret. Nor did the Censorship interfere when its tenor appeared in the native Press, and as the author was one of those unbending Anglo-Egyptian officials who were regarded by Egyptians as specially hostile to all their aspirations, there was a lively chorus of criticism and condemnation. The Report was an able paper, but it entirely ignored the existence of the national sentiment which the war and the democratic ideals of the war had stimulated in Egypt as elsewhere. It bore the stamp of Sir William Brunyate's domineering personality, which was indeed apt to make enemies for him amongst his own fellow-countrymen almost as much as amongst Egyptians. Though chiefly concerned with constitutional changes and with the very cognate question of the Capitulations, it did not spare the deficiencies of the politically-minded classes in an incisive review of their past activities. Of the specific proposals which it contained, the most important was the creation of a new Legislature consisting of two chambers, in the upper one of which—the Senate—not only British Advisers and Egyptian Ministers were to have seats, but also representatives of the large foreign communities, chosen by special electorates, to voice their commercial, financial, and professional interests, which could not be left entirely in the hands of Egyptian legislators so long as the Egyptians themselves took scarcely any part in the economic activities of the country. No particular

alterations were recommended in the constitution of the National Assembly, but it was clearly to be retained only as a lower chamber, subordinate to the Senate, whose opinion was to prevail in all matters of essential legislation. It was this pre-eminence assigned to an upper chamber composed of a considerable number, though not a majority, of non-Egyptians that aroused the indignation of the Egyptians, especially as it was clearly proposed with a view to secure the passage of whatever legislation the British Government might consider necessary for the maintenance of their controlling authority.

The whole Note was doubtless based on the statement of British policy conveyed to Sultan Hussein by the Residency at the time of the proclamation of the Protectorate. For this Sir William Brunyate could not reasonably be held altogether responsible, for in the absence of any later pronouncement it was necessarily part of his brief. But the manner and the tone were his, and his whole conception of the Protectorate was as masterful as his conception of the relations between British and Egyptian officials had usually shown itself. The wrath of the Nationalists against their *bête noire* rose to white heat, and especially of the influential section recruited from the Bar, who also ascribed to Sir William a scheme for introducing British jurisprudence and the exclusive use of English into the Law Courts—a revolution which would have been absolutely disastrous to men trained on the lines of continental jurisprudence and whose only foreign language was in most cases French.

How far the Prime Minister's indiscretion was a calculated one is not a material point. But the storm of protest which it raised helped to lend weight to the proposal that he was then making officially that he and Adli Pasha, the Minister of Justice, should proceed to England to confer personally with the British Government. The proposal was not unreasonable, and it could scarcely be alleged, as it was in the case of the Nationalist Dele-

gation, that two Egyptian Ministers were not sufficiently responsible persons to be furnished with passports. But the answer they received, though couched, of course, in more courteous terms and expressing polite regret that the British Ministers were too much engrossed in the preoccupations of the Peace Conference to find time for discussing Egyptian affairs, was in effect the same. Their proposal was negatived. Rushdi Pasha, who had been in office all through the war, and the whole Cabinet with him, resigned on March 1st.

The excitement in Egypt grew fierce. The very reason given for the refusal to receive the Egyptian Ministers made it the more galling, for the most moderate Egyptians already resented the exclusion of Egypt from the Paris Conference. Those most friendly to England argued that if the Protectorate had been designed to bring her within the fold of the British Empire, she was a sufficiently important partner in the Empire to be allowed some special representation in Paris. Others contended that the mere fact of her international status having been forcibly changed during the war gave her as good a title to have a seat at the Conference table as any of the new States that had sprung out of the war, especially when the Emir Feisal was seen to take his seat there, at the instance of the British Plenipotentiaries, as the representative of the newly-made King of the Hedjaz, whose people the Egyptians not unnaturally regarded as standing on a far lower level of civilisation and power than themselves. Nor did it escape notice that whilst the Egyptian Delegation were refused passports, deputations bound on analogous errands from Cyprus and from Syria were allowed to travel without let or hindrance to Europe.

A tremendous impetus was thus given to the agitation already in progress throughout the country in support of the full programme of Egyptian independence. Zaghlul had developed it with his customary eloquence early in January, in a speech delivered at a gathering in

his honour under the significant presidency of Hamid Pasha el Bassal, a member of the Legislative Assembly, and, what is far more important, a Beduin chief of great influence amongst the tribes to the east of the Nile. Local committees had been formed and public meetings held all over the provinces, and mass signatures collected, until the authorities interfered, for the "mandate" formally investing the Delegation with authority to act on behalf of the "nation." The great majority of the native Press joined in the campaign with all its wonted vehemence. So far, however, as the Nationalists are quite justified in pointing out, the movement had been kept within lawful bounds. Probably for that very reason its significance was underrated, though it had assumed alarming dimensions. In unofficial circles and amongst the older Anglo-Egyptian officials outside the inner ring there were some who saw danger signals ahead. But they had no access to the small group who were in authority, and of these none apparently could read the writing on the wall. The British Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior, the Department specially responsible for law and order, scouted the idea of any serious trouble. Sir Reginald Wingate had been already brought back to England in order, it was officially stated, that Government should confer with him, though his friends declare that his wiser counsels were not listened to, perhaps because they were not urged with sufficient insistence. The Egyptian official world was in the throes of a Ministerial crisis, and there was no Egyptian Government to share even nominally the responsibilities of British policy.

Yet this was the time that was chosen for a most momentous decision. The British Government, still believing apparently that the Nationalist movement was merely the outcome of a shallow propaganda engineered by a handful of discontented politicians, imagined they could stamp it out by striking at the leaders. At six o'clock on the afternoon of March 6th,

Saad Pasha Zaghlul and nine other members of the Party of Independence were summoned by the General Officer Commanding His Majesty's forces in Egypt and sternly lectured on their conduct in promoting a great political agitation directed against the existing *régime*. General Watson reminded them that the country was still under martial law, and warned them against any action likely to disturb order or hamper the work of the Egyptian authorities. Otherwise, severe measures would be taken. It was a short, unequivocal statement. Some of the party wished to reply, but the General was not prepared to enter into any discussion. The party went away more in anger than in fear, and when next day they had sufficiently recovered their composure, they issued a firm but not undignified protest and a complete account of their interview with the General, which they circulated all over the country. The protest was considered to be so worded as to constitute a flagrant defiance of the warning. No time was wasted, and on the afternoon of the 8th four of the most prominent members of the Delegation were arrested and conducted to the Kasr-el-Nil Barracks. On the following morning they were sent to Alexandria and placed on board a British destroyer, which conveyed them to Malta. The four were Saad Pasha Zaghlul, Hamid Pasha el Bassal, Ismail Pasha Sidki, to all of whom I have already referred, and Mohamed Pasha Mahmoud, who after being educated in England and having distinguished himself at Oxford had risen to the post of provincial Governor in Egypt, and been dismissed from it, as many Englishmen in Egypt consider, very unfairly. Within a few days the whole valley of the Nile from Alexandria to the Sudan frontier was in a ferment of revolt.

But before describing the chief events of the next few weeks, which suddenly illuminated, and with a sinister light, the grave situation into which we had drifted largely through our own blunders (not merely during the last few months or during the war only, but throughout

the later period of British control before the war), i may be well to try to gauge the real forces that la behind the Nationalist movement. This movement wa not by any means a new movement. Its origin, as w have seen, could be traced back to the semi-militar revolt in the days of Arabi, and it had begun to reviv some time before Lord Cromer left Egypt. It had show marked activity when Sir Eldon Gorst succeeded him and though driven for a while underground in Lor Kitchener's time, largely by the prestige attaching t that great soldier's name, it received a great deal of secre encouragement from the Khedive Abbas, who hoped t use it as an effective weapon against the British adminis trative control which he detested, and it played at time an unpleasantly prominent part in the Egyptian Legisla ture. It could always rely on Mahomedan feeling for large measure of support. In the El Azhar Universit the establishment of the Protectorate, which place Mahomedan people under the paramount authority of Christian Power, was resented, in spite of all our assu ances, as a blow dealt at the spiritual rights of th Ottoman Sultan as Khalif. Its thousands of turbane students became as ardent champions of complet independence as the pupils, past and present, of th Government schools and colleges who had imbibed fro their Europeanised education a crude belief in Wester ideals of liberty and in the saving virtue of democrati institutions. The lawyers and practically all the pr fessional classes were imbued with Nationalism, whic found its loudest if not its wisest champions in the nativ Press. The sense of injustice generated by the rapi increase in the number of Englishmen employed in th Egyptian public services and the attitude of aloofnes if not worse, adopted by some of them even in the highe ranks towards their Egyptian colleagues and subordinate had given a great impetus to Nationalist sentiments i the large army of Government servants employed i almost every Department. To a new class of idle ric

that had suddenly sprung up with the fabulous harvest of wealth reaped during the war by everyone who owned any land, Nationalism afforded in many cases the novel excitement and notoriety of political activity, and as money was always forthcoming to provide the necessary sinews of agitation, politics became for the first time a paying as well as a patriotic trade.

Mixed with some meaner elements there was at the back of the movement some real earnestness of purpose and a genuine faith in the high ideals set by the Allied statesmen before their peoples during the war, and in the advent of a new and better world in which, according to President Wilson, "the rights of the weakest shall be as sacred as those of the strongest." To the Egyptian masses political theories and arguments had meant nothing before the war. But in Egypt, as in every other country, all the conditions of life, and especially the enormous rise in prices, had produced a wave of social unrest which took many different forms. Whilst the politically-minded classes for the most part held their peace so long as hostilities lasted and seemed to accept even the Protectorate with passive resignation, the poorer classes in the towns had been taught, either by their own hardships, which had been growing steadily more acute since the proclamation of the Protectorate, or by an insidious propaganda, to associate all their new grievances with the fateful word Protectorate, which they readily believed to mean "slavery." For the rise in wages, considerable as it had been, had often not kept pace with the inordinate rise in prices for the very necessities of life. This was the case amongst the landless labourers in the rural districts, and still more in the urban centres, where the lower classes—workmen, carters, cab-drivers, shopkeepers, and a host of minor employees—were hard put to it to make both ends meet.

Is it surprising that when these humble folk, whose ignorance is abysmal, saw their country swarming as

never before with Englishmen, and contrasted their own penury with all the outward signs of affluence and extravagance in which Englishmen seemed to them to live and move and have their being, they should have lent a ready ear to their educated fellow-countrymen who told them it was all the fault of the English and of the Protectorate, which was reducing the people of Egypt to unending slavery? Is it surprising that they should have so quickly come to believe that the only remedy was to get rid of the English altogether out of the country, and that the first step towards that happy consummation was to join the crowd of Zaghlul's followers and unite their voices with those of the great patriots who would free them from the accursed Protectorate, and lead them into the millennium of national independence?

Far more substantial had been the grievances of a great many of the *fellaheen*. I have already described them. Though recruiting for the Labour Corps ceased even before the Armistice, there was no immediate or effective attempt to right the wrongs which had been undoubtedly committed in regard to war requisitions of supplies and transport. Had a proclamation been issued recognising the great value of all the contributions made by the *fellaheen* for the successful prosecution of the war, acknowledging that under the pressure of military necessity real hardships had been, however unwillingly, inflicted upon them owing to the lack of British supervision, and promising prompt inquiry and redress, the harm done to our reputation for kindliness and justice might have been to some extent repaired. A few hundred thousand pounds judiciously and promptly expended would have gone far to remove the sense of bitterness. After all the Syrian expedition would have been scarcely feasible without Egyptian labour and Egyptian supplies, and some expression of gratitude would not have marred its glory. But the saving word was never spoken; and the payments due from the military authorities continued to lag for months behind, and the ugly past

was generally left to take care of itself. So it had come to pass that in the eyes of the *fellaheen* not only had the English long ago ceased to be their friends as in the early years of the Occupation, but had brought back for their own benefit the dark days of Ismail. For them too the beginning of this new "slavery" coincided with the proclamation of the Protectorate, and they were easily persuaded that their best hope of salvation lay with Saad Zaghlul and his friends, whose names they had scarcely heard of in former times.

But though all these different elements had been gradually hardening against the British controlling power, they would not have burst forth simultaneously into such sudden and explosive activity had there not been somewhere in the background real power of organisation. The East has always had its secret societies, but in contact with the West it has now learned to organise and sustain great political movements which, whatever their underground ramifications may be, work freely in the open and claim to derive their sanction from the force of public opinion behind them. We have seen this in the Indian Home Rule movement, and also in Persia, and even in China. But Egypt has naturally been much more closely affected by Turkish Nationalism. Not a dozen years have elapsed since, like a bolt from the blue, the Committee of Union and Progress struck down the Hamidian *régime* at Constantinople to the short-lived cry of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity for all the races of the Ottoman Empire. Badly hit by the Balkan wars, it gambled on its alliance with German militarism and plunged Turkey into the Great War. When her own armies and those of her allies had been finally crushed and she like them had to sue for peace, we fondly imagined that the Committee's power was broken for ever. But it merely bent for a while to the storm. Its organisation had been scotched, but not killed, and the vigorous resurgence of aggressive Turkish Nationalism was bound to find a responsive

echo amongst a certain school at least of Egyptian malcontents, with whom Nationalism is apt to be merely a form of Pan-Islamism.

Egyptian Nationalism is made of a very different stuff from Turkish nationalism. The Turks have always been a fighting race and a ruling race. The Egyptians have not. Little love is or has ever been lost between the Egyptians and the Turks, who were so long their masters. But the common tie of Islam must not be underrated. In Hamidian days Turkish political refugees often took sanctuary in Egypt. Many of the great families, including the Sultan's, are still more Turkish than Egyptian, and after the Turkish revolution of 1908, the Khedive Abbas, who could play the Nationalist when it suited him, and many of the Egyptian leaders of the pre-war Nationalist movement, kept up very close relations with the "Young Turks."

One need not assume, now or in the past, any direct and intimate co-operation between Egyptian and Turkish Nationalists. Their ultimate aims are too clearly destined to clash. But that the Egyptian Nationalists largely modelled their political organisation on that of the Turkish Nationalists can scarcely be doubted. It may lack the Turkish virility, but it makes up for it by remarkable flexibility, and it displays no little adroitness in exploiting the fluctuations of the international situation and the peculiar idiosyncrasies of the Western nations with which it has to reckon. There is even less reason to assume any co-operation between the leaders of Egyptian Nationalism and Muscovite Bolshevism, but the Bolshevist spirit is abroad all over the East as well as the West, and any violent political movement, however peaceful the vast majority of those engaged in it may desire to keep it, inevitably attracts a large number of hangers-on whose anarchist instincts are always against peace and order. These have supplied a contingent of irregular forces to Egyptian Nationalism which has brought much discredit upon it, but which its leaders

have unfortunately been unwilling to repudiate and probably at times powerless to control. For it is one thing to show, as Egyptian Nationalism has done, very great capacity for organisation, and quite another thing to control the forces that have been organised when once some unforeseen accident has set them, perhaps prematurely, in motion.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

WHAT is the Egyptian "nation" of whom Saad Pasha Zaghlul and the Party of Independence have claimed with so much emphasis to be the only recognised leaders? That question can best be answered by analysing the peculiar structure of Egyptian society, which presents some important features without any parallel in other Oriental countries.

The population of Egypt has risen from six and a half to over thirteen millions during the British Occupation, in spite of epidemics and grossly unsanitary conditions and an appalling infantile mortality. It is already in some parts inconveniently dense, and geographical and economic conditions must in a not very remote future oppose almost insuperable obstacles to its indefinite expansion. It is on the whole remarkably homogeneous. There is not in Egypt the multitudinous congeries of races and creeds and castes and languages we have had to deal with in India, nor the tangle of different nationalities we find in Asia Minor and South-Eastern Europe. Practically all Egyptians speak the same Arabic tongue, which was imported by the followers of the Prophet when they swept over Egypt from Arabia thirteen centuries ago. The vast majority are Mahomedans, and the mediæval teachings of El Azhar affect still to-day a far larger number of the rising generation amongst the small minority who receive any education

at all than the forms of Western knowledge imparted in the Europeanised schools and colleges under State control.

The small Coptic minority numbers less than one million. Like other races elsewhere that have been excluded from political power, it has developed a great aptitude for the more elementary forms of finance. Copts have been employed as revenue collectors under every successive *régime*, and well into Mehemet Ali's time the Coptic year (different from both the Mahomedan and the Christian year) was used as the Egyptian financial year. To the present day Copts are employed in considerable numbers under the Finance Department. They are scattered all over the country as money-changers and money-lenders and petty traders. Thanks very largely to American missions, many of them have now received a measure of Western education, and not a few men of wealth and large estates are found amongst them. Until quite recently they kept very much aloof from their Mahomedan fellow-countrymen, whom they regarded with intense jealousy and distrust, and it was a bitter grievance with them that, after the Occupation, the British refused to give them, as a Christian community, preferential treatment over the Mahomedans. But now quite a number of them have joined the Nationalist cause with a great show of enthusiasm. There are Copts even in the Nationalist Delegation, and Coptic priests have paraded the streets in Nationalist demonstrations arm in arm with Mahomedan Ulema, and have even been allowed to enter the mosques and preach Egyptian fraternity from their pulpits. I cannot say that all this effusive fraternisation impresses me very much, as I witnessed similar scenes in Constantinople after the Turkish revolution, when during the short honeymoon of Turkish Nationalism Armenian and Greek priests also went about arm in arm with turbaned Mollahs, which did not prevent the old story of Christian massacres repeating itself soon afterwards all over Turkey. I am more inclined to believe what some Copts have

told me themselves with unblushing frankness, viz., that many of the noisiest Nationalists amongst them are prompted chiefly by the conviction that, whatever happens, they have nothing to fear from the easy-going British, whereas they might have a good deal to fear from their fellow-countrymen if they failed to profess sympathy with a Nationalist movement that ultimately resulted in the effacement of British influence. They had indeed a very fair sample of what it would mean for them in the savage attacks made upon them during the popular rising in 1919.

The small but not unimportant Syrian and Armenian communities, which are amongst the most progressive elements in the country, occupy a singularly anomalous position which is not only of historical, but also of actual interest, as it is directly affected by the release of Egypt from Ottoman suzerainty. They and one or two other still smaller Christian communities have their own ecclesiastical organisations which, subject in most cases to their respective Patriarchates at Constantinople, Antioch, Mosul, etc., have enjoyed in Egypt the internal rights of self-government conferred upon them by the early Ottoman Sultans. But as Turkish *rayahs* they have always been denied the privileges and immunities which foreigners can claim under the Capitulations, though the French and the Greeks have at times tried to assert them on behalf of their own *protégés*, such as the Maronite Syrians and the Greek Orthodox. Many of them have been settled for years and even for generations in Egypt, some of them have risen to high positions, and most of them have become to all intents and purposes Egyptians. But Egyptian Nationalism has of late distinctly encouraged the tendency, of which there have always been traces, to treat them as foreigners and interlopers.

Among the Mahomedans the old Turkish and Circassian families still form a kind of aristocracy that regards the real Egyptians as an inferior race. Most of the Egyptian

Ministers and higher State officials are still recruited amongst them, and as many of them have large landed estates, their influence is considerable. They constitute the chief conservative element in the country, and though many profess to be strong Nationalists they mostly belong to the moderate wing. To them the breach with Turkey means a great deal more than to other Egyptians. Many of them still had family connections in Turkey, and when they went to Constantinople they were treated there with distinction as Turks who merely happened to reside in Egypt. They looked up to the Ottoman Sultan as their hereditary sovereign and not merely as a shadowy suzerain. They had therefore a better excuse than most Egyptians for resenting the British Protectorate. But a good many have been profoundly alarmed by the tendency of the Nationalist propaganda to undermine every principle of authority, and with the memory of the first Nationalist movement under Arabi in their minds they do not feel at all certain that triumphant Nationalism would not turn upon them again and try to rend them as foreigners. They may not love us, but they would rather put up with us than become the servants of Egyptians whom they used to rule.

The reigning house, descended from the Albanian Mehemet Ali, is also of Turkish origin, and at the present moment occupies a more peculiar position than ever. The Nationalists hesitate at present to define their attitude towards the head of the Egyptian State, but some unquestionably incline in principle towards a Republican form of government. Hardly any disguise their distrust of the present Sultan Fuad, who spent most of his life in Italy, and talks Italian better than Arabic. They do not regard him as either a representative Egyptian or a representative Mahomedan. Of the other princes now in Egypt, Omar Tussoon enjoys to-day much the same respect as did the late Sultan Hussein, and for the same reasons, and without the disadvantage of having committed himself to the new order of things. Kemal-el-Din,

Sultan Hussein's son, has not a few friends amongst those who know him well and believe, probably rightly, that he might have succeeded his father had he been less reluctant to place himself under British tutelage. The mere fact that the ex-Khedive Abbas Hilmi used to put as many spokes as he could into the British wheels has sufficed to rally a small but not insignificant party to the cause of a ruler who, as long as he was in Egypt, was universally feared and almost universally detested. Others, again, are more favourably disposed towards his son, partly because he is believed to have separated himself from his father. One thing only is quite clear. A self-governing Egypt would be no bed of roses for the present reigning house.

At the other end of the social scale is the *fellah*, the real Egyptian of the soil racy, who forms nine-tenths of the Egyptian population. None has changed in some respects so much, in others so little, since I first went to Egypt, though two generations have grown up within that time. If we have stumbled in our endeavours to promote the intellectual, or moral, or political education of the Egyptian people, the material benefits which he has derived from British control during the last three decades are beyond dispute. They jump to the eye. Long since gone is the spectacle I witnessed in the days of Ismail, of whole gangs of wretched peasants being dragged away in chains from their own fields to cultivate the vast estates which the Khedive and his favoured Pashas had systematically filched from the people. Gone is the old system of *corvée*, under which the well-nigh annual task of averting the alternate menace of a dangerously high or a dangerously low Nile was carried out by forced labour cruelly recruited and still more cruelly handled. Gone is the *kurbash*, that used to blister the soles of the *fellaheen's* feet until they had disgorged their last piece of hidden silver or wearied the tax-gatherer's arm. I remember in the early years of the Occupation their, at first, almost incredulous joy when each landowner, however

small, began to receive from the Finance Department a paper setting forth the exact amount of land tax he had to pay, and discovered that, having paid it, he was quit of all the time-honoured forms of exaction. No less genuine was his appreciation of the next great boon conferred upon him by the readjustment of the land tax, which put an end to its most glaring inequalities and completed the transformation of all the conditions of agricultural life.

Yet what happened during the war when British supervision was relaxed or proved inadequate shows how quickly the old evils would revive if the *fellah* were left once more to the tender mercies of the petty village tyrants and local authorities. For he has remained in many ways and with rare exceptions the same totally illiterate peasant that he was, working during the critical seasons of the agricultural year as hard and with as thorough an understanding of his business as any other peasant in the world—the Chinaman himself perhaps not excepted—but otherwise abysmally ignorant and with no interests outside his village and the price of land and its produce. He has, on the whole, prospered exceedingly, but prosperity has only very superficially affected his outlook on life. The Egyptian village is still mostly a dingy collection of mud hovels, though with a larger sprinkling of two-storied houses built of sun-dried bricks. The brass pots and pans and other household furniture are more numerous and of better quality. Holiday clothes are more gaudy, gold and silver bangles and other ornaments are more abundant, and European shoes and stockings are a favourite form of extravagance. More money is spent on marriage festivals and such-like occasions of popular merrymaking. But he has only just begun to awaken even to the deplorably insanitary conditions in which he and his forebears have lived from times immemorial.

A recent report by Dr. Balfour's Commission on the future work and organisation of the Public Health

Department sums up as follows the result of its investigations :—

"To-day the greater part of Egypt is filthy and no self-respecting people can be raised in such filthy surroundings. As of old, Egypt is plagued with disease, and it is hopeless to expect a disease-ridden people to play their proper part in furthering the welfare of their country. The infant mortality in Egypt is appalling, actually one-third of the children born dying in infancy. The verminous condition of the *fellaheen* shows no improvement, though lice are now known to be conveyers of typhus and relapsing fevers which account for so many deaths."

Equally hopeless must it be to expect in such conditions any great improvement in one of the most disquieting aspects of village life. Though the *fellaheen* are on the whole of an easy-going nature and good-tempered, and free from the gross immorality rampant in Egyptian town life, almost every village is either divided into hostile factions whose feuds frequently lead to crimes of violence, or else dominated by a handful of bad characters who, sometimes in collusion with Omdehs of the worst type, terrorise the countryside. The result is seen in the alarming statistics of crime, especially murder and attempted murder, robbery, arson, and destruction of crops, *i.e.*, just the crimes due to village vendettas. There is no healthy public opinion that can be enlisted on the side of the authorities to put them down. On the contrary, if some ruffian is caught almost red-handed, it is often impossible to get even the relatives of his victim to come forward and give evidence against him for fear of reprisals. They prefer to wait for his acquittal, when they deal out their own vengeance upon him. British Advisers and Inspectors have set their face against the rough-and-ready methods by which the old-fashioned Mudir and Mamour used to destroy such pests, and the more fastidious judicial methods we have introduced have proved dangerously ineffective. Ten years ago, when things were not even nearly as bad as they are now,

Sir Eldon Gorst agreed to a law authorising the deportation, as an administrative measure, of "notoriously dangerous persons," merely after an inquiry conducted in each case by special commissions in accordance with a special form of procedure. As soon as this law was passed, 281 persons were deported to the Dakhla Oasis, and in the following year there was a notable reduction of the sort of crime dealt with under its provisions. But for reasons which have never been made public the Law of 1909 has been allowed to fall into desuetude, and of late years the annual returns of crime have been soaring upwards with frightful rapidity—a factor which must not be lost sight of in connection with the sudden outbreak of violence amongst the *fellaheen* during the rising in March, 1919. Nor should the large and wealthy landowning class, mostly absentees, and many of them rack-renters, lose sight of it. They have made huge fortunes out of the general rise in the prices of agricultural produce and especially out of the enormous rise in the price of cotton. They are improving the opportunity to screw up the rents of their tenants, and though Egypt is to a great extent a land of small proprietors—there are about a million and a half holdings of under ten feddans—most of these try to rent an additional bit of land from their wealthier neighbours. Many of them can afford at present to pay even extortionate rents. But the moment they cannot afford to do so there is bound to be trouble. The British Occupation has taught them for the first time in their history that the *fellah* too has rights, and Nationalism has recently taught them that violence is at least excusable in the assertion of grievances. An agrarian movement, if once started under the pressure of economic distress, might easily assume against the landlords the same disorderly character of violence as the anti-British rising last year.

Amongst the native urban population there are respectable and well-to-do traders in the bazaars, and skilled craftsmen and artisans, and petty Government officials,

especially of a generation that is now passing away, who still stand in the old ways and are much less affected by political agitation, except possibly that which proceeds from El Azhar, than by the enormous rise in the cost of living. The small wage-earners are those that have been most badly hit, and they are gradually learning to protect their interests by forming their own trade unions and going on strike for a living wage. But labour questions as we understand them at home are never likely to bulk very large in Egypt, for, in a country which is not and can probably never be a great manufacturing country, there are no solid industrial masses capable of organising big labour movements. The largest groups are those that have grown with the growing internal and external trade of Egypt, such as railwaymen, transport workers, and Alexandria dock labourers. It is chiefly these that have resorted during the last twelve months to the novel weapon of strikes, hitherto scarcely known in Egypt, and it is doubtful whether they would have done so but for the contagious influence of political turmoil. Labour conditions generally are still very primitive and chaotic, and as there are large numbers of foreigners, particularly Greeks and Italians, amongst the labouring class, or at least amongst the skilled workmen, effective labour legislation is no easy matter so long as the Capitulations impede the enforcement of the same laws on foreigners and natives.

Essentially a product of modern Egypt and of increased contact with Europe, is the still numerically small middle class confined almost entirely to the towns, but with here and there a few recruits amongst the more prosperous and ambitious *fellaheen*. It is essentially the politically-minded class—lawyers, and doctors, and journalists, and Government servants who have received either in Egypt or abroad a more or less thorough Western education, and have imbibed a certain amount of Western ideas. Its outlook is still largely affected by its Mahomedan environment, from which it can hardly emancipate itself

until Egyptian women have been released from the seclusion in which ancient traditions and superstitions thrive. There are signs, however, that these barriers are gradually breaking down, and one of the most striking features in the political turmoil of the last twelvemonth has been the conspicuous part played by the women of Egypt.

In Egypt, as in most Oriental countries whose domestic institutions have brought about the seclusion of women, the influence she nevertheless wields behind the sheltered walls of the *hareem* is apt to be often underrated. Polygamy in Egypt is rare, and generally regarded with disfavour, except perhaps as a luxury for the rich. In her own home the Egyptian woman, in spite of the proverbial contempt in which the superior sex holds her, is not infrequently a very despotic mistress, both as wife and as mother, and her counsels and commands go abroad with husband and sons after they have crossed the threshold of their house into the outside world which is supposed to ignore her very existence. Until recently the Egyptian lady of the upper classes knew no society outside her home except that of her own sex, but the collective influence exercised through *hareem* society on the habits and opinions of male society was, and is, an important factor. In the old days of the Khedive Ismail, the Princess Mother, who had a vast establishment of her own, was a power in the land, and an almost greater power was the chief eunuch of her palace, a pure negro from the Sudan, who was her trusted and extremely unscrupulous confidant. Even in much later days the source of many political intrigues could be traced to the recesses of some great personage's *hareem*. Native wit and feminine charms went a long way to make up for lack of education. For a good many years past, however, many Egyptians of position have begun to give their daughters a semi-European education, sometimes even having European governesses to reside in their houses, and there are to-day a certain number of Egyptian ladies who are as well

fitted to preside over a *salon* as was, for instance, Princes Nazli, when twenty years ago she alone ventured to ope her house to a small circle of male visitors. Increasin opportunities of European travel, and even the close cor tact maintained by many Egyptians of the better classe who are of Turkish origin with Constantinople, where th revolution of 1908 produced a great feminist ferment imported new ideas and new aspirations into the Egyptia *hareem*. There was not, until recently, any breach o a large scale with the old traditions, but they no longe inspired the same unquestioning reverence.

The *fellaheen* could never seek to impose similar restric tions on their womenkind, for girls and grown-up wome have to go out and do their share—and a very heav share—of work in the fields. The *fellah* indeed too ofte treats them as mere beasts of burden, and whilst th husband jogs along at his ease on a donkey, the wif toils behind him carrying a big load on her head. Never theless, in most cases, she rules in her own home, especiall if, as is often the case, she develops considerable busines capacity. It is she who generally markets all sucl produce as cheese, milk, eggs, etc., and she even become an expert in the sale of cotton. In an interesting pape read before the Cairo Geographical Society two years ago Sir William Willcocks has described how many wive of *fellaheen* have profited by the rising tide o agricultural prosperity to start a little money-lendin on their own account, and not infrequently to thei husbands. In one well-to-do village where the value o the land held by the *fellaheen* amounted to about a quarte of a million sterling, mostly in quite small holdings, anc they had cleared off the whole of their indebtedness except £25,000, some 80 per cent. of the women had small sums of money out on loan, and their husbands were found tc have borrowed from them altogether no less than £6,000 and often at very high rates of interest. The profits at least remain in the family instead of going into the pockets of Greek and Coptic usurers, and the woman's hold upon

her husband is substantially strengthened—a very important consideration in a country where, according to Mahomedan custom, he can divorce her by a mere word.

The proportion of illiteracy amongst the women of Egypt is still appalling. Not one per cent. yet know how to read or write. But the movement in favour of female education which started in the upper classes has begun to spread down to the humbler classes, and the old prejudice against it is dying out even in the rural districts. Amongst the Western-educated middle class especially there are many who feel the lack of intellectual fellowship in their own homes which must continue until their womenfolk have a larger share in the advantages of education. It was just at this stage of social and intellectual transition that political agitation suddenly opened to the women of Egypt an unexpected opportunity of emerging *en masse* from their seclusion. To those in whom an incipient spirit of revolt against the artificial life in which they had hitherto been cribbed, cabin'd and confined was already stirring, the cry for "complete independence" naturally made a strong appeal, for even if they knew little of the larger political issues which it raised, was it not enough that it generated ideas of freedom which could not possibly stop at the outer doors of the *hareem?* Many of them, doubtless, were keen to ingratiate themselves with their lords and masters; others snatched greedily at new forms of excitement that broke the monotony of their lives. They all worked themselves up into a frenzy of patriotic indignation.

In the stormy days of March and April 1919 they descended in large bodies into the streets, those of the more respectable classes still veiled and shrouded in their loose black cloaks, whilst the courtesans from the lowest quarters of the city, who had also caught the contagion, disported themselves unveiled and arrayed in less discreet garments. In every turbulent demonstration women were well to the front. They marched in

procession, some on foot, some in carriages, shouting for "Independence" and "Down with the English!" and waving national banners. They flocked to the houses of the Extremist leaders, and the leading Egerias of Nationalism addressed impassioned orations to them from their windows. They followed in large crowds the coffins of the rioters killed in the street affrays, and their shrill lamentations were an eloquent appeal for vengeance. They took a hand in the building of barricades, and though they generally dispersed when fighting actually began, some of them, it was noted, returned to gloat over brutal deeds of violence perpetrated by the men. When the Government officials went on strike excited groups of women acted as pickets outside the gates of the Ministries to hold up those who wanted to return to their duties.

In the *fellaheen* rising the women, embittered perhaps by the hardships they had suffered through the ruthless requisitioning of war supplies and the arbitrary recruitment for the Labour Corps in their villages, "by order of the British Government," as they were told, joined with the men in tearing up the railway lines and destroying the telegraphs, and in the pillaging and burning which took place up and down the countryside. Women were again equally prominent in all the noisy demonstrations against the Milner Mission, one of their favourite devices being to take possession of the tramway cars at some terminus and drive through the city—without, of course, paying any fares—yelling "Down with Milner!" and other patriotic amenities, and flaunting little paper flags in the faces of any Europeans who ventured to claim their right to travel in public conveyances.

Still more serious is it that the infection spread into the girls' schools. These, like the boys' schools, went on strike to mark their disapproval of Lord Milner and his colleagues, and children of eleven and twelve concocted passionate telegrams of protest to the Minister of Education, and even to the Prime Minister. Members of the

Cabinet themselves complained bitterly that they could not restrain their own daughters. The girls were indeed more violent than the boys, and some of the few English women teachers had an extremely unpleasant time at the hands of their mutinous pupils. Much of this may seem childish, but it would be wrong to make light of the widespread bitterness that underlies this feminine upheaval. For the women of Egypt, though they may be politically powerless, reflect, perhaps in an exaggerated but none the less alarming form, the general uprising against authority produced by the Extremist campaign against the British "usurpers."

Participation in turbulent street demonstrations may not have been the healthiest form of emancipation, but so sudden and violent a change is bound to leave a permanent mark upon the women of Egypt. Whether the men of Egypt were wise to encourage it may be left to them to discover. Anyhow, it has imported a new and very potent ferment which is likely to affect social life more deeply than political life.

It is characteristic of the change which the last forty years have wrought in the mentality of the Egyptians that they have acquired a conception, however extravagant at times, both of individual and national rights which could have little or no meaning for them before the Occupation, when for centuries there had been no rights except those of a despotic ruler, whose will could override every law, and was in fact itself the only law. It is to our credit as well as to the Egyptian's that the rule of law which we succeeded in establishing, though still imperfectly, during the period of British control has raised him to this higher conception of his rights and endowed him in consequence with a new sense of self-respect. Corruption and nepotism are still rife, and have increased appreciably during the last year of political unrest as soon as British control slackened. But Egyptian opinion now professes at any rate to reprobate them, though it is a fact of no slight significance

that the one branch of administration with which for obvious reasons British control has always been reluctant to interfere, viz., the Wakf, has remained a sink of corruption. Yet it is the one which, in its capacity of trustee for a vast number of estates placed by bequest under the protection of Mahomedan "Pious Foundations," should of all others distinguish itself by its integrity. But if the Egyptian has still to learn to assert his rights as freely in his relations with his own rulers as with us, he knows that, whether as a landowner, or a lawyer, or a doctor, the lawful fruits of his labour are far more secure to him than they ever were before. From us too he has learnt, for good and evil, the value of political organisation. Even his wildest political aspirations are the outcome of this new spirit of self-reliance which we have ourselves helped to breed in him, and, had we not sat so long on the safety-valves, it would perhaps have asserted itself with less explosive violence. Though he expresses his opinions with unaccustomed freedom, one rarely heard at first of a case in which his politics affected his personal relations with, and even his liking for, individual Englishmen, though in this respect also there has been latterly a marked change for the worse.

What he has yet to acquire is a sense of social duty. There are plenty of Egyptians ready to denounce the seamy side of Western civilisation, but few who care to apply its better lessons to the grave evils from which Egyptian society suffers. They admit the terrible obstacles which some of their domestic institutions and ancient superstitions oppose to all real progress, but they too often admit them with a mere shrug of the shoulders, reserving all their energy for their political activities. It is rare to find amongst wealthy Egyptians any sort of practical interest in the welfare of their less fortunate fellow-countrymen. Of the large landowners, even amongst those who dwell on their estates and look after them in person, few do anything to improve the miserable conditions in which the *fellaheen* live at

their own doors. Except within the narrow limits of good deeds prescribed by the Koran, which the old-fashioned orthodox Mahomedan considers himself bound to perform, the philanthropy which at home maintains hospitals, endows schools and colleges, promotes housing for the poor, etc., is almost unknown even amongst the Egyptian educated classes. We have our own slums and our wretched little waifs and strays at home that are still a blot on our social system. But one cannot walk about the streets of Cairo very long without being horrified at the crowds of children whom few Egyptians, until we shamed them into it, made any attempt to care for. It is pitiful to see them growing up in the most abject degradation and, with the precociousness of the East, drifting at an early age into criminal and vicious practices of which too many of them already bear the plainest marks. Only in recent times has the Egyptian ceased to leave it entirely to a few devoted foreigners, mostly missionaries and Roman Catholic religious orders, to do something to reclaim them.

The Nationalists may use official supineness as a text for belabouring the Government and British control behind it, but they seldom think, either individually or collectively, of putting their own hand to the plough. They may reasonably complain that we ought to have done more and better in such matters as education and public health, but one would listen to their complaints with more patience if they could point to anything they have done, or done better, themselves. Government schools have done little credit to us, but they are infinitely superior to the private schools started by Egyptians, who for the most part run them as sordid speculations. The Nationalists attribute to official disfavour the failure of the so-called Egyptian University to fulfil the high expectations of its well-meaning founders. But the real reason must be sought in the totally inadequate response made by the Egyptians themselves when they were asked to put their hands in their pockets, and if it still survives,

it has been able to do so mainly thanks to an annual subvention of £2,000 from the very Ministry of Education to which is imputed a desire to strangle it.

One looks in vain for a single hospital endowed or maintained by Egyptians. Perhaps the most popular medical institutions in Egypt are the travelling hospitals for ophthalmia maintained by Sir Ernest Cassel's generosity. One wealthy Egyptian was fired to emulate his example a few years ago by starting a travelling hospital for another disease almost as widespread as ophthalmia. The opening ceremony was attended by the ex-Khedive and Lord Kitchener. But little has been heard of it since then. The war is said to have served as an excuse for closing it down. The Ministry of Wakf, which administers Mahomedan trusts, has, it is true, a medical service of its own, and provides out of its budget for the Abbas General Hospital and an Ophthalmological Hospital in Cairo, as well as for several clinics. But as the Department of Public Health has no rights of inspection over these institutions, one can only infer from the meagre pittances allowed to them that they form no exception to the general rule of inefficiency and worse for which the Wakf administration is notorious amongst Egyptians themselves.

Or take again the Egyptian representative bodies. Their usefulness need not be denied, but they have not enhanced their credit by constantly clamouring for larger powers. For they never learnt to use even the opportunities they had for pertinent criticism, and too often preferred to raise intemperate discussions on questions which were not constitutionally within their purview. Compare, for instance, the industry and ability with which the late Mr. Gokhale and other Indians used their equally limited opportunities to bring trenchant but practical criticism to bear upon the Government of India in the Viceroy's Legislative Council. It is the same with the Egyptian Press. How few native papers conducted by Egyptians condescend to honest argument or common

accuracy! They pontify or rave, but they do not stoop to discuss. Yet the Press constitutes almost the only literature that appeals to the average Egyptian, even amongst the Western-educated classes. Egypt has produced, chiefly in the shape of poetry and rhetorical newspaper articles, a considerable amount of Nationalist literature, but it has produced hardly any national literature worthy of the name either in history, or in science, or in art. The Egyptian Institute and the Egyptian Geographical Society are modelled on European lines, and some of their foreign members, and a few Egyptians trained to European methods of study, have made creditable contributions to the world's knowledge, but these have met with more appreciation abroad than in their own country.

It is, however, unfair to expect too much from people in whom character was atrophied by centuries of oppression before the British Occupation. The Nationalist movement at its best has been touched with genuine idealism, and even at its worst it has shown how far the Egyptians have already travelled from the servile attitude of even such relatively recent times as those of the Khedive Ismail, when the members of the Chamber of Notables convoked by him were told that the supporters of the Government should take their seats on the right, and those in opposition on the left, and all rushed with one accord like a flock of sheep to the right lest they should incur their lord and master's displeasure by the remotest suggestion of opposition to his sovereign will.

But whatever the elements of real nationhood that may be found to-day in Egypt, there is one very grave flaw in the Egyptians' claim to be not only entitled to complete national independence but already fully equipped to stand by themselves as a living nation. No nation can be independent in fact, even if it be so in name, that has allowed itself to fall into complete dependence upon foreigners for almost all that is essential to its economic

life. No other country presents as Egypt does the strange spectacle of large foreign communities dwelling in its midst, and to a great extent outside and above its own laws, who discharge, because the Egyptians have never learnt to discharge them, many and not the least important of the functions on which economic life depends. Even the new Western-educated middle class has utterly failed hitherto to prove its capacity or indeed to take any practical interest in the higher forms of commerce, or industry, or finance. There is no important business, no great industrial undertaking, no big bank, no shipping or insurance company conducted by Egyptians. On the rare occasions on which Egyptians have attempted anything of the sort, their enterprise has failed lamentably, or more often remained stillborn. It is not that they lack the necessary capital, for they invest freely in land and house property. It is difficult to discover the reasons for this arrested development. The Nationalists put it down to the blight of "foreign domination." But what, then, of Bombay, for instance, where British rule has not prevented Parsees and Mahomedans and Hindus competing, often very successfully, with the British in every form of modern enterprise? Whatever the causes of that arrested development in Egypt, the result is only too clear. The economic life of Egypt has been thrown entirely into the hands of foreigners, and of foreigners upon whom the Capitulations confer a privileged position such as no foreign residents enjoy in any European country. Of Alexandria, which is the economic nerve-centre of Egypt, it may be said with far more truth than of Egypt as a whole that it is a bit of Europe in Africa.

Each of the great European communities which, through the default of the Egyptians themselves, constitute to-day the chief factors in the commercial, industrial, and financial life of Egypt is itself an *imperium in imperio*, with extensive rights of its own and with only very limited obligations towards the country out of which it makes its living. Several of these communities are

far more numerous and have a larger stake in the country than our own British community. The latter numbers only 24,000, whereas there are 56,000 Greeks, 40,000 Italians, and 21,000 French, to name only the most important, now that the Germans and Austrians have practically disappeared with the war. All these communities, including our own, may comprise some very dubious elements, but taken altogether they display a high standard of industry, and enterprise, and business capacity, and it is they who have built up the whole of the external and a large part of the internal trade of Egypt, and given an exchange value to her immense agricultural wealth in the markets of the world. They have grown steadily since the British Occupation in 1882, and though some of them may not have much love for us, and we have at times found them extremely unaccommodating, they have relied as much as our own people upon the maintenance of British control as the chief and, indeed, essential guarantee for their safety. They generally distrust the Egyptians, as many Englishmen do, and though they may be more inclined than we are to treat them with an outward show of easy familiarity, they betray at times a contempt and dislike for them which very few Englishmen entertain. If they criticise British methods of control it is not because they consider them too forceful, and if they believed there was any real prospect of our withdrawal from Egypt they, and probably their Governments, would protest vigorously against it as a gross betrayal of common European interests.

That the Nationalist leaders are anxious to propitiate them at any cost has been shown by their remarkable change of front in regard to the Capitulations. Perhaps the most genuine of Egyptian grievances against England has been her failure to secure any real abatement of these oppressive servitudes. Yet now, when we are definitely and formally pledged to take up the question of the Capitulations, and are in a much stronger position to overcome the opposition of other Powers to any serious

revision of the treaties under which they are imposed upon Egypt, the Nationalists, rather than be indebted for this boon to the Protectorate, avowedly prefer to put up with restraints which are a far more effective bar to any real independence than the maintenance of Egypt's connection with the British Empire is likely to constitute. This is one of the paradoxes that illustrate the lack amongst Egyptians of any sense of perspective. They have abandoned to others the control of the great economic forces essential to the life of a modern nation. Yet they profess to believe that the mere formula of complete political independence will, as by the stroke of a magic wand, endow them with every organism required to assure the life of a nation.

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CHAPTER X

ACTIVE REBELLION

THE arrest of Zaghlul and the other three leaders on the afternoon of March 9th was the match that fired the train which, consciously or unconsciously, the Party of Independence had laid. The news spread throughout Cairo in the course of the evening, and the next morning there was trouble. The first to stir were, as usual, the students. They struck work and poured noisily into the streets; first the ancient Islamic School of El Azhar and then the modern School of Law, thus illustrating once more the twofold current of Mahomedan reaction on the one hand, and of Western quasi-revolutionary tendencies on the other, which have from the beginning swelled the tide of Egyptian Nationalism. The Schools of Commerce, Engineering, and Medicine promptly followed suit. Crowds began by gathering outside the railway station, where they waited in vain to greet the departing Four. But when they learnt that these were already on their way to Alexandria, they dispersed into little groups that went their several ways, to other schools, to Government offices, or to native centres of resort, to carry the woeful tidings. Their activities were soon attended with results. On the same day, street lamps and tramway cars were smashed in the Sharia Mohamed Ali, in the heart of the modern Europeanised Cairo. The next morning, the 10th, large crowds of street roughs and holidaymaking workmen paraded

the streets in various quarters, notably in the Musky, at Kasr-el-Nil, and in the neighbourhood of the Ministries, and did considerable damage to shops and public establishments. The offices of *Al Mokattam*, a Syrian Anglophile paper, were sacked. Trains on the Heluan line were stoned and fierce onslaughts were made on tramway cars. For several hours the police tried to cope with the situation, but towards midday they called the military authorities to their assistance. Ultimately fire was opened on the crowd. There were several casualties and a large number of arrests.

Tuesday, the 11th, saw a repetition of what had occurred on the previous day. But voices other than those of the streets were joining in the chorus of protest. A certain number of officials went on strike, and the native lawyers decided to do likewise. Meanwhile, uninterrupted meetings were being held in native circles. The house of Zaghlul Pasha had served for some months as the headquarters of the Party of Independence. When some of his friends called there on the evening of his arrest, his wife received them, and told them in a stirring speech that it was henceforth "the House of the Nation." It continued to be the centre of Nationalist activity. It was there that the Committee, now under the presidency of Ali Pasha Shárawi, received deputations of students, officials, lawyers, and notables from Cairo and the provinces, and held incessant meetings, of which the upshot was invariably "to protest by every means in our power." Deputations were sent round to the foreign Legations with petitions and protests, and emissaries dispatched to all parts of Egypt to intimate that the time had come to "display our feelings."

The leaders did not, it is believed, intend such a grave upheaval as their action brought about. The wave of madness which passed over the country was, in degree if not in kind, the work of fanatical incendiaries over whom they had far from absolute control. This is not to exonerate the Committee from the heavy responsibility

which they incurred by their wild propaganda. For even if it did not advocate, it led straight to the excesses that were afterwards committed. Amongst the agitators they mobilised there were firebrands, uninspired by, and perhaps unknown to, the mass of the Nationalists, who did advocate and sometimes directed the perpetration of the direst outrages. Thus it came to pass that although according to the leaders there was to have been no looting, no molestation of Europeans, no destruction of property, and no interference with Government officials, "who are with us in spirit if not in deed," the tale became, nevertheless, one of murder, pillage, and arson, and of the paying off of old scores, whether against Europeans or Copts, or even fellow "patriots." The truth probably is that when the Party of Independence gave the word, everyone interpreted it according to his peculiar bent or passion.

For three days the demonstrations had been confined to Cairo. But on Wednesday, the 12th, the trouble had already spread. The *fellaheen* were beginning to take a hand in the business of tearing up railway and telegraph lines. There was rioting at Tanta, Damanhour, Zagazig, Mansura, Shebib el Kom and Menouf, but bloodshed only at Tanta, where the demonstrators tried to rush the railway station, which was guarded by a military picket. These opened fire, killing fourteen and wounding fifty. On the same day, as a result of a serious attempt which had been made to interrupt railway traffic, an armoured train was sent to Tanta and aeroplanes began scouring the Delta. An Order under Martial Law was posted on the walls and rained by aeroplanes all over the country, warning "all whom it may concern that any person who destroys, damages, or tampers in any way with railway, telegraph, and telephone communications, or who attempts to commit any of these acts, is liable under martial law to be shot."

In Alexandria, the population seemed lukewarm, and Wednesday passed with nothing but a noisy procession of students and schoolboys along the main streets of the

town. But in the Law Courts, as in Cairo and in Mansura native barristers refused to plead and hearings had to be adjourned wholesale. In many places, however the population was not yet thoroughly roused. But the agitators quickly succeeded in making capital out of the shooting that had taken place in Cairo and in Tanta, conveniently overlooking the fact that it had been in both cases provoked by deliberate acts of violence. Their appeal had its effect even on the Egyptians who had held aloof from the demonstrations. They admitted the necessity of putting a stop to pillage, and they deprecated, at least ostensibly, the excesses which had been committed by the demonstrators. But they failed to see why Egyptians should be shot down for such trifles. Such things had not happened before, in the days of Cromer or even of Kitchener, the terrible soldier. Was this severity too the outcome of the Protectorate? Childish as this reasoning may seem, the casualties of the first few days did much towards the spread of disorder. It was the kind of weapon than which the firebrands wanted none better. Just as, in Arabi's time, the Egyptian gunners had borne a corpse into the Khedive's palace in Alexandria, demanding vengeance, the bodies of the rioters who had been killed in collision with the British troops were carried all round the city in immense funeral processions which halted at stated intervals for impassioned speeches. Still more effective was the stream of female mourners who rent the air with their piercing lamentations. One can picture the scenes in the mosques on the following Friday, scenes which were to be the prelude to the worst deeds during the rising.

First and foremost in Cairo, where as the congregation emerged from El Azhar on that very Friday, March 14th after prayers, they espied a motor lorry, with a party of armed British soldiers. The mob gave a yell, rushed, and those that were armed fired. The soldiers replied, killing thirteen and wounding over thirty. At Kaliub on the same afternoon a British soldier was murdered,

and two passenger trains to Cairo were attacked by a mob of 2,000 to 3,000 villagers. Among the passengers, however, were a few British officers and soldiers who succeeded in keeping the mob at bay with their revolvers and in bringing the trains through to Cairo. The mob then sacked and wrecked the station.

On the 15th the disorders extended to Upper Egypt. At Reqqa, the morning express from Cairo was attacked and pillaged, all passengers' baggage being looted, while the station was sacked and burnt. At Wasta several trains, including goods trains, were completely sacked. An official of the Egyptian State Railways, Mr. A. T. Smith, was murdered; Mr. Graves, of the Ministry of the Interior, had a narrow escape, and the station was pillaged and set on fire. At Hawamdieh, the large sugar factory was attacked by villagers and stoutly defended by five native policemen, who repulsed the rioters. At Beni-Suef, crowds invaded the Law Courts during a sitting, drove out the officials, and tried, but unsuccessfully, to get hold of the British judge. They then proceeded to attack the Mudirieh and various other Government offices, which they wrecked. In the afternoon, the Beduin flocked in, looted the town, and laid siege to the three houses where British residents had taken refuge. They were held at bay with the help of an Indian detachment hurried in from Fayum. In Lower Egypt the main railway line was destroyed between Kaliub and Benha, and Cairo cut off from the whole of the Delta.

On Sunday, the 16th, matters went from bad to worse. In the Delta, Minet el Qamh was the scene of the worst trouble. A mob from the surrounding villages raided the Government buildings and released all the prisoners. They then attacked the station, which was protected by a military picket who opened fire, killing thirty and wounding nineteen. At Tala and other localities in the Gharbieh province branch lines of the railways were cut and stations sacked. At Zagazig an onslaught was made on the Mudirieh, and an attempt to let loose the

prisoners. In Upper Egypt, the siege of the British residents at Beni-Suef continued and lasted until the Tuesday, when a relief party arrived by boat from Cairo and removed the women and children.

On Monday, the 17th, the remaining telegraph and telephone lines were cut. Cairo was now entirely isolated except for aeroplanes and wireless. Nevertheless, the authorities were determined to show that they had no wish to interfere with orderly manifestations of public opinion. In agreement with the Nationalist leaders who went bail that there would be no breach of the peace, they sanctioned a large demonstration, some 7,000 or 8,000 strong. At the head of it rode the Commandant of Police in a motor-car with one of the Ulema from El Azhar. The procession, which paraded the main streets, stopping at the principal foreign Consulates to shout for Egyptian Independence, was kept well under control and dispersed without any untoward incident. In Alexandria, on the other hand, a rough crowd of students and workmen tried to break their way through a military cordon and suffered casualties amounting to fourteen killed and twenty-four wounded. Some 250 arrests were made. Similarly, at Damanhour, a mob largely composed of Beduin tried to break into the Mudirieh and fell upon the Mudir, who attempted to make them desist. The troops fired and killed twelve, and about 100 rioters were arrested. On the same day, serious riots broke out at Rosetta, where the Merkez building was burnt down; at Zifta, where the mob hoisted the Turkish flag on the Merkez and declared a provisional Government; at Mansura, Zagazig, Benha, Qallin, Samanoud, and Damietta, where similar scenes were enacted.

In the evening, General Bulfin, who was, since General Allenby's departure for Paris on the 12th, in command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, arrived in Cairo by motor to take matters in hand. Already, a few days before, General Watson, commanding in Cairo, had sent for the members of the Committee of the Indepen-

dence Party and warned them very seriously that the "extraordinarily lenient" attitude of the military authorities could not last indefinitely, and that as the Committee had started the agitation he looked to them to stop it. Otherwise, drastic action would be necessary. The Committee's reply was characteristic. They declared that, much as they regretted it, they felt unable to allay the excitement, as the situation was now entirely beyond their control. However, they would do their best. Only they feared that, if they were to appeal to the agitators for moderation, these would turn on them. They may have been already alarmed at the consequences of the invitation they had themselves addressed to the nation "to display its feelings," but they were not prepared to jeopardise their popularity by publicly withdrawing the invitation. As soon as he reached Cairo, General Bulfin at once appealed again, not only to the Committee of the Party of Independence, but also to a gathering of notables, convoked by him for the purpose. He intimated that so far only defensive measures had been taken, but that it seemed necessary now to begin taking offensive measures which might entail considerable damage and loss of life. It was the duty, therefore, of every Egyptian to assist the authorities and to act in such a way as to avoid the bloodshed and suffering which would result from such measures. He concluded by solemnly declaring that he intended to do his duty and expected them to do theirs. His manner even more than his words made some impression, but it was some days yet—and the worst days—before the deeds with which he followed up his warning could take effect outside Cairo. Destruction went on wholesale of railways and telegraphs and telephones, of banks and offices, and farms and property in general. Provisional "republican governments" sprang up at Zifta and Zagazig and Minieh, and even villages set up their own "soviets."

The most revolting story of this period of brutal mob law was that of which the small town of Deirut in

Upper Egypt was the scene. It is best to quote the official account subsequently sent by General Allenby to the Foreign Office :—

"On the train which left Luxor at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 17th, were two officers and eight other ranks. When the train stopped at Nag' Hamadi some natives entered the train and insulted the men. The two officers noticed this, and took them into their first-class carriage. They reached Assiut in the early morning of Tuesday, March 18th, where three of the men left the train, and Kaimakam Pope Bey, Inspector in the Egyptian Prisons Department, joined it. The train left Assiut at 4 a.m. Crowds had collected at every station; they threw stones at the train and attempted to board it, shouting for the 'Ingleez' (English). Several stations were passed in safety, but on arrival at Deirut a huge crowd rushed at the train, pulled the driver from the engine, and forced a way into the first-class carriage, where the British were now collected. It seems probable that two of the party were killed here. The train went on again, some of the natives of Deirut remaining on board. On arrival at the station of Deir Mowas another large crowd joined them, and there, with stones and knives, murdered the remainder of the party, not one of whom was armed. All the bodies were left in the train, except one which has not yet been traced, and the train went on. At every station huge crowds had collected who raised shouts of joy on hearing that the English had been killed. When the train reached Minieh, the bodies were taken from the train and buried."

The bodies were mutilated beyond recognition. Every conceivable brutality was committed on them. One had his leg cut off, and, as Egyptian extremists have been found to boast, some of the assailants in their frenzy drank his blood. Another was hung up, whilst those lying on the ground were spat on and had filth thrown on them. And all the while the crowd watched, screaming its delight.

Nor were the ruffians who took part in these outrages a mere village rabble. A large number of arrests were made in connection with the murders, and eighty-five accused persons ultimately tried at Assiut included the Omdeh, or village headman, two schoolmasters,

several landowners, a barrister, three policemen, besides students and *fellaheen*. The final sentences were announced on the 9th. There were originally fifty-one sentences of death, but of these seventeen were commuted, and also six more on the intercession of the Prime Minister, who was then Mohamed Said.

Whilst the Europeans in Beni-Suef were relieved on the 18th, disturbances continued to spread with alarming rapidity all over Upper Egypt. Minieh, Assiut, and the town of Fayum were each threatened by large numbers of Beduin reported to be advancing from the west, to whom General Bulfin addressed a separate and very peremptory warning. At Minieh, all the British residents had to take refuge in a house, where they were beleaguered for several days, but poorly armed, and in serious danger, especially when the arrival of the Deirut train with its ghastly cargo of British corpses stirred the passions of the populace. But the immediate danger was averted by the courageous intervention of an Egyptian doctor, Mahmud Bey Abdel Razek. He was himself a member of the revolutionary committee in the town, and was ultimately condemned to three years' penal sevitude, though he would seem to have deserved more lenient treatment, for it was he who stopped a dangerous rush at the most critical moment. All communications with Cairo had, however, been cut, the Mudir had lost all authority, and power was in the hands of a "Provisional Government." The only security was provided by a company of Egyptian infantry, who fortunately remained staunch, and though there was a great deal of looting, especially in the Coptic quarter, a relief boat arrived on the 22nd and removed all European residents to Cairo.

At Assiut matters were also very serious. There was the same outbreak of looting, the same outrages on Copts. and the same threat of a Beduin invasion. British, American, and other European residents were concentrated in one building, which was almost too extensive to defend with the small force available, namely, 100

Punjabis with two machine-guns, one Lewis gun, and a handful of civilians for whom there were not sufficient rifles. The main attack came from Waldia. The attackers numbered fully 3,000 *fellaheen* and Beduin, most of whom were armed with rifles, revolvers, spears, and old-fashioned swords. Fortunately, the attack was never made simultaneously at both ends of the position defended. At one moment about 900 convicts made a determined attempt at escape from the jail immediately behind the position, and if it had not been for the gallantry of the Mamour and the warders, the defenders would have been taken in the rear. The attack lasted from the morning of Sunday, March 23rd, to midday on Tuesday, the 25th, when Brigadier-General Huddlestone arrived with a relief force of 250 Royal Irish.

By that time General Bulfin had got the situation very nearly in hand. The numerous mobile columns which he had rapidly organised were spreading their web all over the Delta, and a punitive column under General Shea was pushing steadily into Upper Egypt. The repair of the railways had so far progressed that on March 19th passenger trains had been able to leave Cairo for Alexandria and Port Said.

To complete the narrative, the following extracts are reproduced from the daily bulletins issued at General Headquarters :—

March 21 : "North of Cairo the main lines of communications have been restored. The main stations have been occupied and a regular system of patrols instituted. . . . In the central Delta and east thereof disorderly mobs are continuing the campaign of destruction and loot. The peasants have helped themselves to crops of the State Domains and fired the houses of the employees, also the buildings of the Behera Land Co. at Kom-el-Wahad. . . . Gatherings of villagers and Beduin have made further attacks on the railway-line between Cairo and Fayum. In the Fayum itself, large gatherings of Beduin are reported. Aeroplanes on patrol have in some cases been met with rifle-fire. . . . There have been several cases of attacks upon sentries at night."

March 22 : "Consequent upon the extension of military

occupation, law and order is being restored rapidly. Complete calm prevails in the Kaliub province and the same result is in process of attainment in the more remote provinces. A great deal of stolen property has been recovered by the Police. The rural police and the ghaffirs have performed their duties, under circumstances of considerable provocation and risk, with great firmness and discretion. . . ."

March 23: "Further progress has been made in the restoration of order. Main-line trains are now running on a regular timing. . . . In the outlying districts in the north of Sharkieh, Dakhlieh and Gharbieh and in the west of Behera the situation is still unsatisfactory. . . ."

March 24: "In the northern provinces disorders are becoming more and more sporadic. . . . Zifta, Mit-Ghamr and Mit el Ghourashi still constitute centres of disaffection. . . . The disaffected Beduin of the western Behera have made overtures to the coast Beduin between Alexandria and Sollum. The latter, however, have remained loyal and are themselves protecting the coast railway. Punishment was inflicted yesterday on the Beduin and villagers of the western Behera, when bombs were dropped at Hosh-Isa and Abu-Matamir upon rebels attacking the railway-line. . . . The Mamur of Sennoures has organised a force of 1,000 villagers to protect the railway-line. . . . Much looting and incendiarism has occurred in the town of Assiut. . . ."

March 26: "Reports from the districts show that during the recent attacks upon communications, country roads and canals were also seriously damaged. Damage to roads has been most severe in southern Dakhlieh and the Behera. In some instances the rioters also attacked irrigation canals and cuts, removing the baulks which are used to regulate the water-supply. A canal bridge between Mansura and Simbellawein was destroyed, blocking the canal and causing the flooding of a large tract of country. . . ."

March 27: "In certain localities the notables are assisting the authorities by forming Committees of Public Security."

March 29: "No further disturbances have been reported. Brigadier-General Huddlestone's punitive expedition is remaining at Assiut to restore order in that neighbourhood. . . . Major-General Sir John Shea is moving south from Wasta with a strong column of all arms, restoring order as he goes. . . ."

March 31: "The work of repairing the Upper Egypt railways is now being taken in hand. A report received from the engineer in charge states that the damage to the line is very serious. . . . Owing to the destruction of the railway

it has become necessary to establish communications steamer with the southern provinces. In the present state of the river, this has necessitated the opening of sl gates at Assiut and Assuan. . . ."

April 1: "Sixteen mobile columns are operatin Lower Egypt. . . ."

April 4: "The activity of the mobile columns in Delta has been further extended and regular lines of c country patrols have been established between the r railways and roads. In addition to the mobile colu armed trains are patrolling the railways and water-pa have been established on the rivers and canals. . . . the active co-operation of the civil authorities, condit in the Delta are rapidly returning to the normal; the cou is being cleared of brigands who before the present disturba existed largely by blackmailing the law-abiding classes. The railway is restored as far south as Beba, and trains from Minieh to Assuan. . . ."

April 5: "It may be stated that owing to the destruc of stations and signalling apparatus both in Upper Lower Egypt, it must be long before the railways can with normal passenger and goods traffic. The destructio lamps at present irreplaceable must also greatly reduce possibilities of night working. Furthermore the repai the Delta Light Railway and of certain branch lines r await the return of really settled conditions. Rail communication between Cairo and Minia is restored. .

April 10: "In the provinces the work of re-insta the civil authorities is almost everywhere complete. certain localities it has been possible, owing to the retur normal conditions, to relax the restrictions on mover after dark. . . ."

April 11: "All seems to be quiet throughout Egypt. .

These quotations might be considerably ampli for it was not till April 18th that Major-General S to whom had been entrusted the restoration of orde Upper Egypt, reached Assuan, and occasional outbr of violence and some cases of armed resistance occu even later. But the rebellion had been scotched by end of March. In three weeks it had strewn Egypt wreckage. A sum of £E.1,000,000 has been allo in this year's Budget for the compensation of inno sufferers, but it represents only a small part of the dan

actually done by the destruction of railways and railway stations and railway material and telegraphs and telephones and Government buildings. In their undiscriminating fury the rioters had in some places attacked even the irrigation works, on which more than on anything else the life of Egypt depends. Worst of all, the rebellion had shown how ferociously cruel and bloodthirsty an Egyptian mob, usually so good-tempered and easygoing, can become when its passions are wrought to a white heat by fanatical agitation working on a foundation of real grievances. It had shown also how timorous and helpless on the whole, in spite of the good example set by a certain number of individual Egyptians, mostly provincial officials, the law-abiding section of the population is in a country accustomed for centuries to quail under despotic rule. So widespread was the outbreak that very considerable British forces were required and had to be used with unflinching energy, not only for the restoration of order, but also to avert still greater bloodshed. The repression was undoubtedly stern, but it was not vindictive, and the British troops as a rule displayed remarkable self-restraint in the face of often treacherous provocation. Whatever share of responsibility the blunders committed by British civil and military authorities during the war must bear for having sown the tempest, they would have incurred a still deeper responsibility had they flinched before the whirlwind when it came and plunged Egypt into anarchy. We owed it to Egypt to rescue her from anarchy, and she was rescued.

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CHAPTER XI

PASSIVE REBELLION

WHEN the storm burst in Egypt, Sir Reginald Wingate (who was still High Commissioner, though he never returned to Cairo) was in England, having left Sir Milne Cheetham in charge of the Residency, and whilst it was raging at its worst, General Allenby, who had been summoned over by the British Plenipotentiaries to the Peace Conference in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief in Egypt and Syria, was in Paris. As the news grew from day to day more ominous, British Ministers had at last to admit that there was an Egyptian question, and that they were face to face, not with a mere frothy agitation to be put down by the deportation of a few leaders, but with a widespread and indeed national upheaval throughout the country. Never having had any policy and still too busy with other matters to conceive one, they no doubt thought themselves fortunate in having ready at hand a "strong man" who would tide them over the crisis. General Allenby was sent straight back to Cairo, having spent only two days in Paris, as Special High Commissioner. In the curious phraseology of his instructions, he was "directed to exercise supreme authority in all matters military and civil, to take all such measures as he considers necessary and expedient to restore law and order, and to administrate in all matters as required by the necessity of maintaining the King's Protectorate over Egypt on a secure and equitable basis."

The appointment, though announced in London on March 22nd, was not announced in Egypt till the day of General Allenby's return to Cairo, March 25th. By that time the storm was already abating throughout the Delta, and even in Upper Egypt the worst was over. In the capital itself the public peace had not been seriously disturbed since the riotous demonstrations which had set the fiery ball rolling in the early part of the month, and whilst there was still an underswell of dangerous agitation, there was a distinct lull on the surface. The most serious symptom was the continuance of a veritable epidemic of strikes. Some of these strikes may have originally had some economic justification or excuse. But they were now clearly being promoted or engineered by political agitators. Not only railwaymen and tramwaymen, but even the Cairo scavengers and road waterers were more or less continuously on strike, and whenever they were induced by fairly liberal concessions to return to work for a few days, they at once began to threaten to go out on strike again. The schoolboys and students were perpetually deserting their class-rooms in order to demonstrate their patriotism in the streets, and to these noisy demonstrations they also applied the quite inappropriate name of strikes.

The lawyers had been the first to set a mischievous example by remaining away from the Law Courts as a protest against the deportation of the four Pashas. It was believed, however, that they could not go indefinitely on strike without breaking the rules of their profession. But they found a way round that difficulty by causing their names to be transferred from the list of practising to that of inscribed but non-practising lawyers. Even then it was hoped that they would absent themselves only for a short time by way of recording their displeasure, and then resume their duties. Such was perhaps originally their intention. But their attitude merely stiffened when the Government, faced with a paralysis of justice, stepped in and instructed the Law

Courts that all cases had to be proceeded with as usual and that none were to be adjourned without legally valid reasons being produced. It was an obviously proper step. The barristers nevertheless took it as a slight on their dignity. They held a meeting, two meetings, ten meetings, and after much debate they decided to send a protest to the Ministry of Justice. It was difficult to believe that a body of men, all of them intelligent and educated above the average of their countrymen, and who prided themselves on representing not only a very responsible profession but the intellectual *élite* of Egypt, could regard it as a patriotic duty to paralyse the administration of justice, which it was their special function to aid. But they persisted in doing so.

Worst of all was the spread of this strike contagion amongst Government officials. Only a few of them, mostly from the Ministry of Public Works, had at first stayed away from their offices, and only for a day, as a manifestation of their sympathy with Zaghlul. The majority remained at their posts during the worst part of the disturbances, though they showed signs of increasing unrest, and it was not till the very day of General Allenby's arrival from Paris that things assumed a much more serious aspect with the formation of a Special Committee of officials, some of them of very high rank, who took it upon themselves to examine the position of public servants "with regard to the existing situation" and to decide on any course which might be found necessary "in the interests of the country." The Under-Secretary of State for Public Works played a particularly prominent part in this movement, and the significance of such a self-constituted body assuming such functions under such auspices was unmistakable. It was nothing less than a threat of passive rebellion at the headquarters of Government, and General Allenby had to meet it at the same time as he had to complete the repression of active rebellion in the provinces.

Military operations continued and the rigour of martial

law could not be relaxed. But General Allenby lost no time in seeking contact with whatever law-abiding elements there might yet be in the country. Egypt was still without a Government, and as there were no Ministers whom he could consult, he invited a number of Egyptian notables to the Residency the day after his arrival, and he informed them, according to his instructions, that his threefold object was, first, to restore order, secondly, to inquire into the causes of discontent, and thirdly, to redress justifiable grievances. He added that it was their duty to help him in the restoration of order and they ought to trust him to work for the redress of grievances and the welfare of the country. Meanwhile he appealed to them warmly to co-operate with him in calming the "passions now let loose."

The immediate result seemed promising. A circular was issued on the following day by some fifty of the most influential personages in Egypt, including the Rector of El Azhar, the Grand Mufti, the Coptic Patriarch, nine ex-Ministers, and other Moslem and Coptic notables, and it was circulated at once all over the country. It was in the form of an appeal to the Egyptian nation to return to peace and order, and was drafted in such a way as to lay special stress, not only on the wickedness, but also on the uselessness of acts of violence. The appeal read like that of men who were in earnest and who genuinely desired to put an end to a state of anarchy. How much effect it may have actually had it is not easy to say, nor whether all were equally in sympathy with the document to which they affixed their names, for order was already being fast re-established *manu militari*.

On March 31st the High Commissioner was in a position to announce that he was "glad to see that disturbances, outrages, and the destruction of property have largely subsided. . . . He thinks the time has come when responsible Egyptians with the interest of their country at heart should submit to him a statement showing

what steps they consider necessary to restore tranquillity and content."

This announcement was the result of consultations with two groups of leading Egyptians who had called on him that morning, one consisting of all the Ministers in the late Cabinet, and the other of the members of the Cairo Committee of Independence. General Allenby urged on both groups the necessity of arriving at some understanding with a view to the formation of a new Cabinet. He met with some response. The ex-Ministers were willing to resume office, for they felt that things could not be expected to improve so long as administrative chaos prevailed. But their way must at least be smoothed by the release of the interned Four, an essential prelude to the return of normal conditions. The same view was put forward still more emphatically by the members of the Committee of Independence. Ex-Ministers and Committeemen were ready to give a solemn undertaking that on those conditions they would work towards the restoration of good will, reserving the solution of the larger problems of future policy until passions had calmed down. Only the release of Zaghlul and his companions was to be the first step. General Allenby himself was by this time quite convinced that he could not hope for the co-operation of any Egyptian Cabinet until the measure which had immediately provoked the upheaval was repealed. He promised to communicate the views expressed to him to His Majesty's Government, and he presumably gave them his own strong support. For on April 7th a Proclamation appeared in which General Allenby announced "in agreement with H.H. the Sultan" that there were "no restrictions on freedom to travel" and that the four deportees to Malta would "be released from internment and given similar freedom of movement." On the following day Hussein Rushdi Pasha, as Prime Minister, and most of his former colleagues resumed office. The few changes in the composition of the new Cabinet were unimportant.

The immediate effect was like a wonderful transformation scene. Only a few days before there had been fresh rioting in Cairo, and on the 3rd a great demonstration which was to have ushered in a big strike of officials ended in an ugly affray in Abdeen Square when the mob set fire to a house from which an Armenian was believed to have fired a fatal shot at the crowd. British troops had to use their rifles, and nine rioters were killed and sixty wounded. Now the streets of Cairo surged with delirious crowds as drunk with joy as they had been a week before with fury. Throughout the whole of Egypt the news that Zaghlul and his three colleagues had been released and were free to proceed from Malta to Paris was greeted as a great national triumph. With the consent of both Egyptian and British authorities, public demonstrations were held and went off everywhere at first quite peacefully. But in Cairo there were still very mischievous forces at work. It may be that they represented merely a small minority whom even the Committee of Independence could no longer really control—hot-headed students, fanatics from El Azhar, with a sprinkling of disgruntled lawyers, discharged officials, and disappointed candidates for Government appointments, and behind them a residuum of reckless spirits who did not want peace and who had fled back to Cairo when the provincial risings were repressed. There were those amongst them who believed that though they had failed to organise resistance to mobile columns and aeroplanes, they could still defeat General Allenby's endeavour to effect a real reconciliation by a campaign of underground intimidation. They were thoroughly familiar with all the arts of social terrorism so powerful in Oriental countries, and they knew exactly how to work on the weaknesses of their fellow-countrymen, and especially on their innate credulity and timidity, if once they were possessed by the vague dread of some unknown and unseen danger. Hence the power of the "Black Hand" and other mysterious societies which, if they had no very

substantial existence, were at any rate names to conjure with.

The influence of all these desperate elements quickly changed the temper of the Cairene crowds. On April 7th they had paraded the streets waving flags and branches stripped off the trees. Even the Sultan was, for the first and so far for the last time, acclaimed in his palace at Abdeen. Rushdi Pasha, who had not then actually resumed office, was recognised and effusively embraced by a group of excited Effendis. Zaghlul's house was, of course, the chief centre of popular enthusiasm, but all the foreign Consulates were visited in turn and shouts raised for the Allied Powers, even sometimes for the English. But two days later collisions with the military began again. A British colonel was severely wounded and two British soldiers were beaten to death in Abdeen Square. Some incidents probably originated in unfortunate misunderstandings, but in most cases the crowd wantonly attacked isolated Englishmen, and between April 9th and 11th four officers were wounded and eight soldiers killed and fifteen wounded. Nor was it only against the British that the mob let themselves go. The Armenian who had fired or was supposed to have fired on the crowd on April 3rd had escaped. This had rankled, and, as reprisal, seven Armenians were killed in unpatrolled quarters of the town before any troops could come to their rescue. The Armenian community was panic-stricken and whole families had to be shifted into safer quarters both in Cairo and in Alexandria, where there was also an angry hunt for unfortunate Armenians.

In spite of all these ugly incidents, the troops, judiciously handled, succeeded in checking any further outbreaks of wholesale violence, and order was once more restored in the streets of Cairo. In the provinces the active rebellion was practically over. But strikes and incitements to strike continued. The Strike Committees clearly took their orders direct from political

wirepullers. Picketing assumed the form of open intimidation. The wretched scavengers who wanted to resume work were driven off by these pickets, and convicts had to be mobilised who, under guard of British soldiers, swept the streets as best they knew. The postal sorters and distributors, also under threats from picketers, had to shut their doors and windows, and for a whole week no postman dared come out with a satchel. Tramwaymen, after fitful spells of strike and service, resumed their occupation escorted by British soldiers. The extremists retorted by vitriol-throwing, which had been first used against strike-breakers on the railways. Several cases were reported on April 12th against both tramwaymen and quiet shopkeepers who had refused to put up their shutters as a political demonstration; eleven more on the 14th; four more on the 15th. On the 16th a notice under martial law appeared stating that the penalty for vitriol-throwing was to be death. The notice was effective, and vitriol-throwing ceased. A force styling itself the National Police sprang into existence, ostensibly to help in the preservation of order, in reality to extend the operations of the terrorists. It had its own badge, its own officers, its own organisation, until General Allenby ordered its suppression under martial law. More difficult to reach was an undercurrent of agitation kept up by secret leaflets, lampoons, and unlicensed newspapers, published "without the authority of His Excellency the Censor," in which extravagant abuse, sometimes facetious and sometimes obscene, was lavished on the Sultan, the Ministers, the non-strikers, and all "traitors" in general, a term of opprobrium used to cover all law-abiding people.

The students and schoolboys were as deaf to the entreaties of many of their parents as to the admonitions of the Ministry of Education, and they continued to subordinate their love of work to the love of their country which required them to remain patriotically idle. Some of them were ripe for any mischief. Others were naïvely

convinced that they were making history. An English teacher who remonstrated with one of his best pupils was solemnly asked by him in a phrase that had evidently been carefully rehearsed: "But really do you not think our Egyptian revolution is more glorious than that of France?" The members of the Egyptian Bar took equally little notice of a Proclamation issued under Martial Law dispensing with the presence of advocates and empowering the Courts to determine all matters within their jurisdiction and to raise of their own motion a legal plea benefiting any party; while any party to the suit, criminal or otherwise, could be represented by any person appointed for the purpose. Under that Proclamation the Law Courts were enabled in theory at least to resume work, but the lawyers knew how to make it in practice a dead letter.

Most extraordinary of all was the pretext seized upon by the malcontents amongst the Government officials to carry the doubters with them and bring off the strike which they not unnaturally regarded as their trump-card. News reached Cairo of a statement made by Lord Curzon in the House of Lords that "one gratifying feature of these deplorable occurrences in Egypt has been the behaviour of many of the Egyptian officials and of the army and police. These last have behaved especially well." This statement was in accordance with fact, and was if anything an understatement. The Special Committee of Officials did not dispute its accuracy, but they took exception to their action being looked upon as "a gratifying feature." If they had stuck to their work, it was only, they declared, because they had thought it was their duty to do so, and not at all because they did not share in the general sentiment of the country, still less by remaining at their posts had they intended to imply any opposition to or disapproval of it. A pronouncement to this effect was drafted by the Special Committee and presented to the Sultan on April 1st, together with an intimation that they proposed to

go on strike for two days as a protest against Lord Curzon's praise.

Accordingly, on April 3rd all the native officials remained away from their offices. In some departments, including the State Telegraphs, the strike had been already started the day before owing to a misunderstanding. The grand demonstration arranged for the same day to lend greater emphasis to the strike of officials had ended disastrously in the big riot in Abdeen Square. The next day being a Friday and the Mahomedan day of rest was, according to the usual custom in Egypt, a holiday in all Government offices. On Saturday the strike was supposed to end and a great number resumed work, mostly, however, those who had been reluctant to go on strike at all. But the majority still remained away. On Sunday the Special Committee met and a compromise was arrived at. It was agreed in principle that work should be resumed, but that once a week—every Monday—officials were to absent themselves as a formal protest "until the wishes of the nation were fulfilled." This was greeted as a triumph for the moderates, but it was anyhow of short-lived duration, for the Extremists made the very fulfilment of "the wishes of the nation," which was to put an end to all idea of a strike, a new excuse for prolonging it. As soon as the news of the release of the four Pashas arrived on the Monday (April 7th), the Extremists prevailed on the officials to desert their posts again in order to take part in the national rejoicings over that auspicious event, and before the rejoicings were over, they persuaded them to remain away until they obtained "satisfactory pledges" from the new Cabinet which was at last being formed. Rushdi Pasha took office on April 9th, and he at once gave an interview in the native Press in which he warmly urged the people and the officials to return to their normal occupations. As far as the officials were concerned, this did not have the desired effect. On the contrary, their demand for "pledges" had by that time

developed into a demand for definite guarantees bef they would return to work. The principal conditi set forth in their ultimatum were :—

1. That the Cabinet should officially recogı the Egyptian Delegation as the legal mandatory the nation.
2. That the Cabinet should declare its non-rec nition of the Protectorate.
3. That British sentries and guards should withdrawn and their places taken by Egyp troops.

The new Prime Minister and his colleagues sho even under this provocation the most exemplary bearance. They entered daily into interminable cussions with the Special Committee of Officials. Government could possibly accept such conditions at hands of its own servants, and Rushdi told them They raised issues which could not be settled off-ha and which it was not within the power of Egyp Ministers to settle. But he went on arguing with mutinous subordinates, held up to them the exan which Ministers themselves had set by agreeing to ret to work, and entreated them to do likewise and to le larger political questions over for subsequent decis For three whole days the Cabinet sat almost continuou sometimes until midnight, and they interviewed official strikers jointly and separately. It was a naus ing spectacle, said an eye-witness, to watch these in views between harassed Ministers and a crowd of I voiced and hectoring Effendis, whose arrogance g from day to day. Some of the saner members of Special Committee themselves took fright. They that the movement was getting beyond their control and they offered to support Rushdi Pasha if he is another appeal, addressed, however, not merely to officials, but to other strikers too, calling upon t to return to work. This appeal was issued on April 1

but it merely spurred the agitators to further efforts. They denounced not only the Ministers but with even more vehemence the "traitors" with whose disgraceful concurrence it had been issued, and forced the dissolution of the Special Committee, which was replaced by another and larger body who repudiated the appeal and decreed a strike *à outrance*. The Government retorted by yet another appeal (April 15th) curtly enjoining upon officials to return to work forthwith. In support of it a Notice under Martial Law was published the next day, stating that "a campaign of intimidation having been carried on against Government servants and others, the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force has given orders for the arrest of all persons detected in such activities."

But the recalcitrant officials snapped their fingers at appeals and warnings. They remained on strike, not to enforce any service grievances, but in order to dictate by disorderly threats the whole policy of the Egyptian Government. The Prime Minister, driven to despair, resigned on April 21st. The Cabinet had lived for just twelve troublous days. General Allenby, once more left solely responsible for carrying on the affairs of the country, was compelled to take action. He had held his hand as long as there was any chance of Egyptian Ministers showing that they were once more able to govern. But they had failed, and the country could not go on indefinitely, not only without a government, but without an administration. The strike of Government officials had not, it is true, spread to the provinces, and barely even to Alexandria, which is the second most important administrative centre in Egypt. But Cairo is the seat of administration, and for nearly six weeks the work of every public department upon which the administration of the country depended had been thrown into utter confusion, and whilst the great majority of Egyptian officials, even when not actually on strike, were engrossed in strike talk and strike schemes, the

British Advisers and their British subordinates had carried on as best they could with the help of the few Egyptians who had the courage to stick to their posts and to run the gauntlet of the strike pickets, largely composed of Egyptian women, who held the gates of the Ministries and not only cursed every blackleg as a "traitor" to his country, but often hung on forcibly to his coat-tails. Intimidation played as large a part in the strike of officials as in all the other strikes which were going on at the same time, and it was useless to look for any abatement of the universal strike fever so long as such an evil example continued to be set to the whole community by a large body of public servants, many of whom occupied positions of exceptional responsibility and influence in the State. Nor could any new Cabinet, even if it had been possible to form one, be expected to cope with the situation which the Rushdi Cabinet had confessed itself powerless to master.

So on the day after Rushdi had resigned, General Allenby asserted his authority, and asserted it not merely as High Commissioner, but as Commander-in-Chief in Egypt, armed with all the powers of martial law. He issued the following Proclamation :—

Whereas, by the Proclamation of November 2, 1914, it was declared that Martial Law was instituted in Egypt in order to supplement and not to supersede the Civil Administration, and all civil officials in the service of the Egyptian Government were required to continue the punctual discharge of their respective duties ;

And whereas a number of officials and employés have recently deserted their posts, and it has been made clear that they have taken this action with the object of dictating a course of policy to the Government of His Highness the Sultan and of repudiating the Protectorate which His Majesty's Government has established over Egypt ;

And whereas such officials and employés have for the most part refused to return to their work when called upon to do so by the President of the Council of Ministers ;

And whereas any official or employé wilfully absenting himself from his work in the above circumstances is committing an offence under the Proclamation above cited and any person

promoting or leading this movement or preventing officials or employés by threats of violence from doing their work is liable to severe penalties under Martial Law;

And whereas the time has now come for the intervention of the Military Authorities in this matter in support of the Civil Administration;

Now I, Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby, by virtue of the powers conferred on me as General Officer Commanding-in-Chief His Majesty's Forces in Egypt, hereby order that all Government officials and employés absent from their duty without leave are to return to their posts forthwith and punctually and efficiently to perform the duties assigned to them.

They will receive no pay for the period of their absence without leave.

Every official or employé who shall not return to his post on the day next following the date of this Proclamation and thereafter punctually perform the duties of such post shall be considered for all purposes as having resigned and his name shall be struck off the list of Government officials.

Every person who by persuasion, threats or violence shall prevent or seek to prevent any person from complying with this Order will be liable to arrest and to prosecution before a Military Court.

The effect was instantaneous, and reinforced the very same day by the announcement that the High Commissioner had received a Note from the American Diplomatic Agency and Consulate-General in Cairo, communicating the recognition of the British Protectorate by President Wilson. The Party of Independence was for the moment staggered by such a blow to all its hopes of support from the Peace Conference. The official strikers realised that, if General Allenby was determined to put down "passive rebellion" in Cairo as effectively as "active rebellion" had already been suppressed in the provinces, they would be marked men and much more easily brought to account than the political wire-pullers of the rising, who had for the most part managed to escape scot-free.

Of all the various strikers, the officials were now the first to resume work. They flocked back to their different Ministries, some with evident alacrity, the majority

still in a sullen and vindictive mood. Another stiff Proclamation threatening to close the Government Colleges and Secondary and Special Schools if a sufficient number of pupils failed to return by a given date had an equally salutary effect, and the strike demon amongst the students and schoolboys was at least temporarily exorcised. It required even less pressure to induce the barristers to return to the Law Courts. All the other strikes too collapsed almost automatically, showing how much more politics had had to do with them than economics. Every other overt form of agitation rapidly subsided, or lingered on only in inflammatory speeches delivered in the mosques and in scurrilous literature which could be surreptitiously circulated. But a whole month passed before General Allenby was able to find any Egyptian of real standing to accept the burden of office. The strike of the officials had shaken all sense of political stability.

From this point of view the passive rebellion of April, 1919, though confined almost entirely to Cairo, was an event of graver significance and had more enduring results than the active and violent rebellion which had spread over the whole country in the preceding weeks of March, 1919. It disclosed for the first time the intense resentment of British control which had been slowly accumulating at the headquarters of Government in the public departments most closely and intimately associated with the chief agencies of British control; and it gave thereby a fresh and powerful impetus to the political campaign of which it was itself the outcome for the abolition of the Protectorate and the complete emancipation of Egypt from the tutelage of the British "usurpers." Moreover, such an unprecedented strike as that of Government officials, in common with, and even more than, the lawyers' strike and the strikes of students and schoolboys, largely aided and abetted, it must be remembered, by their native teachers, dealt a blow to the whole principle of authority from which no community could easily or speedily recover. Though, in the particular form it then

assumed, passive resistance collapsed outwardly under the compulsion of martial law, it had defeated the Egyptian Government, and the spirit which inspired it quickly recovered from its collapse and produced a political deadlock which mere Ministerial changes in Cairo were henceforth powerless to affect. By driving the Egyptian Ministers to resign, it had gone far to discredit the theory maintained until then throughout the Occupation, that whilst Egyptian Ministers were expected to act in all important matters in conformity with British advice, not only would the British control be exercised in consultation and co-operation with them, but they would receive from it such effective support as would be required to uphold their authority in the country. The Rushdi Cabinet had resigned, not as the result of differences with, or in obedience to, the wishes of the British Government, but simply because the forces controlled by the Party of Independence were too much for it. Though British Ministers took a long time still to look the fact in the face, the maintenance of British control was henceforth to be a straight issue between them and the Party of Independence, the immediate result being to reduce the position of Egyptian Ministers to that of heads of departments carrying on merely routine work, and without any influence whatever on the general political situation. General Allenby succeeded after four weeks' laborious effort in inducing Mohamed Said Pasha to form a new Cabinet. As the event was to show, Mohamed Said, even if he had cast off his inveterate habit of hunting with the hounds and running with the hare, could no more than Rushdi prevail against the flowing tide of Nationalism, and during his eight months' tenure of office the centre of Egyptian political activities was steadily transferred from Cairo to Paris, whence Zaghlul Pasha with far more authority than any Prime Minister gave its marching orders to his Cairo Committee, and through it to the politically-minded classes that stood for the Egyptian nation.

CHAPTER XII

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE CONTROL

WITH the return of Mohamed Said to power, the was once more a Government in Cairo, though not o that carried much authority. The Prime Minister, particular, undoubted as was his ability and especial his adroitness, enjoyed very little credit, and least of with those who remembered or knew how dubious part he had played as Minister in Butros Pasha's Cabin and afterwards as Prime Minister in the last years befo the war under the ex-Khedive Abbas.

But the gravity of the situation in Egypt had far ou grown any mere change of Egyptian Ministers. Throug out the Occupation Egyptian Prime Ministers, even t ablest amongst them, had played only a secondar though often a very important and useful, part. It w the British control, exercised through the Residency a through the British officials attached to the vario Departments of the Egyptian Administration, that h directed the policy of Egyptian Ministers and suppli the driving power. The great lesson conveyed by t recent upheaval, though the British Government w slow to learn it, was that the old system of control whi had already shown signs of weakness and deteriorati before the war had broken down under the tremendo war strain and required to be entirely overhauled. T predominance of military over civil authority duri the war had not caused but it had precipitated the brea down.

What had that system been? It had been from beginning to end a patchwork of convenient fictions, designed to cover up inconvenient realities, partly under the stress of international difficulties, and partly from our traditional predilection, not by any means always unwise, for compromise, where the Frenchman, for instance, prefers a *situation nette*. The first result was to leave the Foreign Office in sole charge of Egypt, after the British Government had assumed the right to have the last word in matters, not only of policy, but of internal administration in Egypt. The reason was obvious and not in itself unsound. The Egyptian question did not cease to be an international question after we occupied Egypt in 1882. Far from it. The equivocal character of our position in Egypt, the bitter hostility of the French, and the suzerain rights, however circumscribed, which Turkey still claimed to exercise, were a source of constant embarrassment to the Foreign Office, and the Egyptian question only began to lose some of its acuteness as an international question with the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904.

The Foreign Office remained, therefore, after as before the Occupation, the Department responsible for Egyptian affairs. But it was neither designed nor equipped to deal with the administrative aspects of British control. In Lord Cromer's time it fell into the habit of leaving them entirely to him, and it continued with very rare exceptions to leave them in the same way to his successors. This was almost inevitable, for there was seldom, and only accidentally, anyone at the Foreign Office—let alone any constituted body of experienced advisers such as the Secretary of State for India possesses—to whose inside knowledge of Egyptian administration the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs could turn for an informed opinion. Similarly, at the Cairo end, His Majesty's representative had only as a rule on his staff diplomatists for whom Egypt merely meant an episode of uncertain, but usually short, duration in a career that has nothing

to do with administration. So between Downing Street and the Residency—a term I use to cover the direct representative of the British Government in Egypt, whether styled as before the war Agent and Consul-General or, as since the Protectorate, Resident or High Commissioner—the *liaison* has always been very slender. It may therefore well be doubted whether the British Government had ever realised the many changes both in spirit and in form which the system of British control had undergone since it ceased to be the "one man show" that it was when Lord Cromer ran it, and could alone run it so admirably, because he himself had made it.

When one begins to inquire at all closely into that system, the question that soon arises is whether one can properly talk of any system at all when the powers and responsibilities of British and Egyptians engaged in carrying on the government and administration of Egypt have never been defined, and the limits of British control have always remained uncertain, and seem to have fluctuated according to the policy and personality of the hour. The only principle ever laid down publicly is to be found in despatch from Lord Granville which dates back to the early days of the Occupation (January, 1884).

> "It is essential that in important questions affecting the administration and safety of Egypt, the advice of Her Majesty's Government should be followed as long as the provisional occupation continues. Ministers and governors must carry out this advice or forfeit their offices."

That principle underlay the veiled protectorate which we exercised over Egypt for more than thirty years before the Great War, and it presumably underlies the formal protectorate which we proclaimed in the first year of the war. But to what extent and by what means has it been enforced ?

It was never actually enforced against the head of the Egyptian State until the ex-Khedive Abbas sided with our enemies on the outbreak of war with Turkey, though

Lord Kitchener had been driven by the ex-Khedive's incorrigible bad faith to contemplate the necessity of enforcing it in 1914, had there been no war. That the principle has occasionally been enforced against Egyptian Ministers who definitely refused to follow British advice there are cases on record to show. The first was that of Sherif Pasha, whose refusal to agree to the abandonment of the Sudan provoked Lord Granville's despatch. Sometimes the issue was not so clearly stated, and the resignation of various Egyptian Premiers, from Nubar and Riaz down to Hussein Rushdi, has frequently been due not so much to any difference on one specific point as to a general divergency of views between them and the British representative for the time being. The latter's influence was anyhow almost always paramount in the selection of a new Prime Minister and in the constitution of his Cabinet. When, for instance, Riaz resigned in 1895, Lord Cromer told me at the time that he had had to negative two or three suggestions made to him by the Khedive as to who should succeed him, and had finally been obliged to tell him point-blank that Nubar was, in his opinion, the only Prime Minister possible in the circumstances, and Abbas, much as he disliked Nubar, sent for him and asked him to form the new Cabinet.

A much more obscure question is how the principle laid down by Lord Granville adjusted itself to the normal everyday relations between the Egyptian Ministers and the Residency, and between British Advisers and officials and their Egyptian colleagues in the different branches of the Administration. Those relations were certainly not and could hardly be governed by any definite rules and regulations. The Residency dealt officially with the Egyptian Ministers alone. With regard to questions of administration it naturally relied very largely upon the opinions of the English Advisers and officials actually in the Egyptian services. It was the custom, I believe, to summon them to conferences at the Residency on matters deemed to be of primary

importance. But their Egyptian colleagues did attend such conferences, and even if they had previously consulted, their opinions reached the Resid only at second hand. Decisions arrived at in those ferences were conveyed sometimes by the represent of the British Government direct to the Egyptian P Minister or to the Minister specially concerned, and s times by the Financial Adviser, the only British Ad with a seat on the Egyptian Council of Ministers. the recommendation thus made partake of the natu advice, or was it an order ? So long as it was acce it could, of course, be treated merely as advice, but often was it only accepted lest it should be translated an order ?

In questions of lesser and more purely departm importance it seems to have depended very much the personality of the individual British Adviser or o how far he consulted the Egyptian head of his depart or other Egyptian coadjutors. It was in any case through him that the Egyptian view was conveyed, was conveyed at all, to the Residency. Many Egyp were no doubt quite satisfied to be relieved in this of any real responsibility. Others took advantage to cast upon the British the responsibility for irre proceedings of their own, which neither the Residenc their British colleagues or superiors knew anything a or would have approved of, had they known. It w easy and pretty safe way of sheltering themselves ag criticism from their own people. On one occasio Egyptian Minister, who was supporting before Legislative Assembly a measure on which he had in full agreement with his British Adviser, lost heart he found himself being violently attacked, and h been asked how he could venture to defend it, just pl feebly : "The English wanted it." Weakness o sort was partly the cause and partly the result tendency amongst some British officials to treat Egy as mere inferiors who were there to take and carr

instructions and not to have opinions of their own. It is small wonder that Egyptian officials came to believe that their advancement depended upon subservience rather than good work.

Still worse was the effect of the belief which, after Lord Cromer's time, steadily gained ground, largely as the result of the indulgence granted to the Khedive Abbas and his *protégés*, that it was the policy of the British control to prefer Egyptian Ministers and officials who never "give trouble," and in recognition of their docility to turn a blind eye on their shortcomings. Such tendencies soon spread, and there can be little doubt that they became very marked in later years among some of the British officials charged by their respective departments with the inspection of the Egyptian Administration in the Provinces. Nowhere could they be more dangerous, for nowhere can a few bad failures bring a whole service so quickly into disrepute. The strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest links, and a very small number of misfits suffice to destroy confidence. The relations between the provincial authorities and British inspectors, whose reports to headquarters may be decisive, are in fact far more delicate and depend far more upon personal tact and good feeling than the relations between the higher Egyptian and British officials at the seat of government. Had it not become the fashion with some of the higher British officials to hold the Egyptians of no account, such important duties as those of inspection would never have been entrusted to young and inexperienced Englishmen who, even if only through sheer ignorance, trod heavily on Egyptian corns. The mere question of manners is not so unimportant in an Oriental country as we are sometimes inclined to hold it. A British official may be extremely competent, but whether in the very responsible position of an Adviser, or in a much more humble post, he is of no use in Egypt if he is incapable by temperament, or will not take the trouble, to get on with Egyptians, and to treat them with the courtesy and personal for-

bearance in which they are seldom themselves lacking. It was a point on which Lord Cromer felt very strongly, but it seems to have been forgotten under his successors.

The lower the scale of the official hierarchy into which a British element was introduced the greater became the jealousy with which it was viewed by the Egyptians. They are more or less willing to recognise the need of British advisers and of British experts if they are carefully selected. Even in this respect their faith in the British controlling power was put to a severe strain. But when young Englishmen were imported in increasing numbers whose qualifications were not often at once apparent, whilst appointments were made in the higher ranks for which it was difficult to make out any *prima facie* justification, the Egyptian complained bitterly that he was not given a fair chance and that Englishmen were preferred before him simply because they were Englishmen. If it were argued that there were no Egyptians fitted for the posts, he disputed the argument, or he retorted with equal bitterness, and with some show of reason, that the fault lay with our own failure in the course of so many years to educate and to train up, as we had ourselves undertaken to do, Egyptians who should by this time have been fit for responsibility.

No information with regard to the actual number of Englishmen employed under the Egyptian Government has been made public since Lord Cromer's Annual Report for 1906, in which he gave the full figures in that year, as well as in 1896. During that decade there had been an increase from 286 to 662. The increase of foreigners of other than British nationality had been only from 404 to 590. The increase in the whole strength of the Egyptian Civil Service, foreigners and natives together, had been considerable, viz., from 9,134 to 13,279, the number of Egyptians having increased by 3,583. Lord Cromer was evidently not quite happy about the large increase in the number of Englishmen, and in his comments on the subject he gave about the only indication to be found

in his Reports that the task of supervising the great machinery of British control had grown too much for him. "Although I have endeavoured," he wrote, "to exercise some general supervision over the employment of Europeans in the Egyptian services, and although individual cases of special importance have been generally referred to me, I have not for some years past made a thorough examination of all the details." He clearly showed that in his opinion the increase was such as to require very full explanation. He contended that there had been no departure from the general policy pursued ever since the Occupation, which had been "to limit the number of Europeans as much as possible, to employ Egyptians in the great majority of the subordinate and in a large number of the superior administrative posts, and gradually to prepare the ground for increasing them further." He pointed out that European agency was required and would continue to be required for two reasons: "In the first place to supply the technical knowledge which until very recently the Egyptians have had no opportunity of acquiring; in the second place to remedy those defects in the Egyptian character which have been developed by a long course of misgovernment." He proceeded to justify the increase in each separate Department, and the part of his defence which carries the least conviction is the contention that the Department of Public Instruction had done all that could be reasonably expected to supply the demands of the public services.

The chief point of interest, however, is that Lord Cromer felt himself called upon to justify an increase which after all had only brought the number of Englishmen employed in the Egyptian public services up to 662. What would he have said could he have known that according to the Budget provisions for 1919–1920 that number would show a further increase of over 150 per cent., viz., to 1,671! If one reduces this figure by the number of Englishmen, 117, employed without a contract and *hors cadre*, a class

which Lord Cromer possibly did not take into acco
or if one allows also for the number, relatively sr
of British judges and employés of the Mixed Tribu
whom Lord Cromer specifically excluded, the t
increase may be a little, but a very little, less. But
large enough to give one furiously to think. The r
development of Egypt and her growing wealth
reasonably account for some of this increase. But v
the Egyptians saw was that this new Civil Service
Egypt, recruited in England on the same lines as the Br
and Colonial and Indian Civil Services, that was sta
only in the last years of Lord Cromer's time, poured i
annual contingents as a matter of course. Besides
several relatively new departments have indented for r
and more technical experts from home. That also
have been to some extent inevitable, but the num
might have been smaller if there had not been a tend
to yield to the temptation to get out young English
already trained to work on the accustomed lines ins
of laboriously training young Egyptians to do
work.

But whether these or other reasons be good, bad
indifferent, the fact remains that the number of Eng
men in the Egyptian public services has enormo
exceeded, in proportion to size and population, the nur
employed in India, though it is through them that
whole of British India is governed, whereas English
in Egypt are not, except in a few departments, execu
officers. Egyptians can hardly be blamed for resenti
result that pointed, not to the increasing share we
repeatedly promised them in the government and adm
tration of their country, but to a diminishing one.

Certainly the strongest part of the Nationalist
is that which even moderate men who do not other
fully subscribe to the programme of the Party of Inde
dence base on the steady deterioration of British co
even before the war. I will state it briefly and as fa
possible in the words in which it was set out to me. T

Egyptians recognised the necessity of a friendly agreement with England, whose assistance and protection they, however, carefully differentiated from control and protectorate. They did not deny the material benefits which the Occupation at first conferred upon Egypt, nor the high standard of endeavour it preserved under the vigilant supervision of Lord Cromer's great personality. But they maintained that it had failed more and more grievously as time went on to achieve even the narrower tasks set before it, let alone the higher task of training up Egyptians to govern themselves. Even the reports issued by the Ministry of Education convicted it, they contended, of dismal failure in respect of both primary and secondary education, for in close upon forty years it had barely reduced the overwhelming percentage of illiteracy, and to-day, as in 1882, Egyptians who wanted a real education were almost compelled to go abroad for it. They read, though with much less reason, a similar confession of failure into the report of the latest Committee on Sanitation. Or, turning to the Irrigation Department, formerly most popular and highly respected, where to-day, they asked, was the confidence it once enjoyed? Not only Egyptians but many Englishmen had ceased, they asserted, to trust either its competence or its integrity of purpose. In almost every department the British *personnel*, they declared, had been steadily expanding, even in the subordinate ranks which it had always been understood should be filled by Egyptians, and while the quantity had increased, the quality from top to bottom, with rare exceptions, had deteriorated in efficiency, in industry, and in manners. Egyptians in the public services were treated more and more as inferiors and not as collaborators, and the British official world had steadily cut itself off from any intimate contact with Egyptians, save with those who were prepared to have no opinions of their own.

Such results, they contended, were not due merely to a general deterioration of the British *personnel*. They

were due to the whole system of government and adm
tration, which was one of divided and ill-defined res
sibilities. In the Government itself, and in every p
department, there were Egyptians who, nominally
superiors, were in fact merely the servants of Eng
subordinates. The best Egyptians had grown more
more reluctant to accept such humiliating relati
Hence there had been a parallel deterioration in
quality of the Egyptians who were prepared to
with or under the British.

Where to-day was there a Riaz or a Nubar? Egyp
Ministers of that stamp had disappeared, just as
Englishmen of Lord Cromer's stamp. Possibly
Egyptian public sometimes held the English Adv
responsible for things that were not done at all on t
advice. But how was the Egyptian public to kn
It knew that, as Lord Granville laid it down in the e
days of the Occupation, the Egyptians are expected
abide by British advice. How was it to know where
advice began and where it stopped? How was it to k
whether Egyptian Ministers, who perhaps inspired
little personal confidence, were to be believed when t
sheltered themselves behind the alleged wishes of
British? And had not the British themselves substitu
orders for advice and made subserviency the one esser
qualification for office instead of character and integri

Mutatis mutandis, did not the same apply to Pa
influences? On this point it would not be fair to
produce what has been said to me about present-
influences. I prefer to confine myself to one insta
given to me out of the past. Many Egyptians
encouraged by Lord Cromer to make a stand aga
the arbitrary and corrupt tendencies displayed by
ex-Khedive, but they were left to suffer for their p
when Lord Cromer's successors thought it more po
to give Abbas a freer hand, perhaps, as the Egypti
themselves now suspected, not so much in order
placate him as to give him enough rope to hang him

with, and thus to have a pretext for abolishing the Khediviate altogether.

To these arguments it is scarcely a sufficient reply that if, before the war, British control had been pushed to unwise lengths and exercised sometimes with little tact or intelligence, we could at least show unbroken records of material prosperity. For it was that material prosperity that helped to disguise the effects of the hopeless blurring of powers and responsibilities inherent to a system that had certainly no parallel elsewhere. So for a time did martial law during the war, as the military authorities themselves assumed all power and responsibility. In so far as they did not actively interfere with the administrative machine, it went on working, driven mainly by the momentum it had retained from peacetime. But when under the pressure of military necessity a crisis came that placed upon the administrative machine a strain which had to be borne chiefly by subordinate officials released from British supervision, it broke down badly because the excessive centralisation of British control had tended to discourage rather than to promote amongst them a sense of responsibility proportionate to the unaccustomed power suddenly devolved upon them.

The breakdown cannot in fairness be imputed to the rank and file of British civilians, who never worked harder than during the war. The Anglo-Egyptian Civil Service, as it has developed since Lord Cromer's days, may be open to criticism, but one cannot but sympathise with the impossible position in which it was then placed. At the outbreak of war there was, of course, the greatest keenness to go to the front, and too many of the younger men were actually allowed to volunteer for active service. Then new organisations had to be created to deal with special war demands. Every department that had scouted the idea of any possible reduction of its British staff in normal peace times found itself suddenly and enormously depleted just when abnormal war duties made the severest demands upon it. The work to be done by

those who remained increased proportionately, unti
became almost overwhelming. Just as there had b
no settled policy as to the exercise of control in the p
so it ceased now to be exercised at all at the very mon
when the need for it became greater than ever bef
and native agencies were left free to revive in connec
with the recruitment of the Labour Corps and the req
tioning of supplies all the old methods which British
trol was supposed to render impossible. Worst of
they were left free to revive them to all appearan
under our authority and for our own benefit. An equ
disastrous failure occurred again later on when
British Adviser to the Ministry of Interior showed him
so entirely out of touch with what was going on in
country that he whose business it was to be well-infor
was convinced, and affirmed, on the very eve of the ri
in March, 1919, his conviction, that there was no dan
whatever of any serious trouble.

The British control had paid the penalty of the nar
bureaucratic spirit which had gradually crept in. Cent
isation had been carried to excessive lengths—not me
departmental centralisation, but the centralisation o
power in the hands of a few privileged individuals
claimed to know all that was worth knowing. They
aloof, not merely from the Egyptians, but also from
foreign communities whose sensitive feelings required
much consideration as the very large interests they ha
the country, and even from the British community
side the official pale. There are many experienced Bri
officials as well as many unofficial Englishmen w
business has brought them into close contact with
Egyptian people outside Cairo. But they were seldo
ever consulted, and the small ring of Advisers
surrounded the Residency discouraged the freedom
access to it which had been one of the most conspicu
features of the Cromer *régime*. Public opinion,
especially Egyptian public opinion, was treated a
negligible quantity. Still less had any attempt

made to create and guide it. In fact, sound public opinion can only be created by a sound system of national education, and that had been our worst failure—a failure so deplorable in its consequences that it deserves to be dealt with separately and at greater length. During the war it had been deemed convenient to close down the Legislative Assembly, the one constitutional mouthpiece of Egyptian opinion, which could no longer even let off steam in the Press, heavily muzzled by the military censor. Whilst no explanation of British intentions was vouchsafed to the Egyptian people, who saw their future being shaped for them without ever being drawn even into formal consultation, those British officials—and there were plenty of them though they could not make their voices heard — who were clearsighted enough to gauge the danger of such complete estrangement were themselves left without any guidance as to the purpose and meaning of our policy, and often without any information that could enable them to correct the many mischievous statements deliberately put about with the object of creating mistrust, or to encourage the Egyptian friends or subordinates who applied to them for advice. They could only grope their way in the dark and do what good they could, by their individual efforts, and almost, as it were, by stealth.

When Lord Allenby returned from his hurried visit to the Peace Conference as Special High Commissioner to find the country strewn with wreckage from a storm that had only partially abated, his task was, or should have been, not only to set the Egyptian Government on the rails again, but also to repair the vital defects in the machinery of British control which had produced so grievous a breakdown. But the latter was an especially difficult task for a man who had no previous experience at all as an administrator and no knowledge of Egypt or of the East save such as he had gleaned as Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Forces in Egypt and Syria. The British Government had themselves not yet realised that

it was a pressing task, and Lord Allenby could therefore scarcely be expected to do so. He was, at any rate, quick to see the immediate necessity of important changes in the *personnel*, if not in the system. In the Ministry of Interior, where failure had been most glaring, Sir Reginald Clayton succeeded Mr. Haynes as Adviser. Sir Paul Harvey, who had resigned in Lord Kitchener's time, was induced to return to Egypt as Financial Adviser, a post which had not been filled since the death of Lord Edward Cecil. Mr. Sheldon Amos was appointed to succeed Sir William Brunyate as Judicial Adviser, and Mr. Paterson became Adviser to the Ministry of Education in succession to Mr. Dunlop. These appointments indicated no real break with the old system, but they were on the whole well received, and none was more warmly welcomed by Egyptians as well as by Englishmen than that of Mr. Paterson, though rather on account of his personality than of any special qualifications or experience. Upon him fell perhaps the heaviest of all our responsibilities, for nothing is more difficult to make good than the mistakes of a whole educational system, and our mistakes both of omission and commission had been manifold.

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CHAPTER XIII

EDUCATION

At a time when the Egyptian Government schools were being demoralised by turbulent political agitators, and schoolboys and students were going on strike and deserting their classes for rowdy street demonstrations, the Ministry of Education displayed unconscious humour in selecting as a motto for a recent report on elementary education a quotation from the Talmud: "By the breath of the school-children shall the State be saved."

By whatever standard we judge the educational system devised for the youth of Egypt under British control, it has tended not at all to the salvation of the State. It is unquestionably the worst of our failures. At the end of nearly four decades illiteracy weighs down 92 per cent. of the male population and over 99 per cent. of the women of Egypt. In spite of the warning example of India before our eyes, we have barely yet approached the urgent question of popular education, beyond multiplying the old native *Kuttabs* and trying to extend their usefulness, as far as the appalling dearth of teachers who can even read and write allows, to something more than the mere learning of the Koran by rote. Not till 1916 were higher elementary schools started to take up the teaching where the elementary schools leave off, and to give in a four years' course, between eleven and sixteen, simple but practical instruction, suitably differentiated

in urban and rural districts, and "designed to the general capacities of pupils with a view to th absorption in the business of life."

Perhaps the best thing that has been done sc elementary education has been the delegation of to which I have already alluded, to the Provincial (It has already yielded some good results and a genuine public interest in the question. It lec appointment in 1917 of a Commission to inquire subject, and its Report was published in 1919. not a particularly illuminating document, and Commission took no evidence, it is little more record of pious opinions. But it shows at any r little has been done in the past, and how enormo leeway to be made up. Egypt devotes only 2 p of its revenue to educational purposes, as against per cent. in other backward countries, such as the States before the war, and of that small amo meagre pittance that goes to elementary ed though the *fellaheen*, who need it so badly, contril bulk of the Egyptian revenue, barely reaches per annum actually expended by the State. One therefore be surprised to find that, whereas in countries the attendance at elementary schools is estimated at about 16 per cent. of the populatic only 3 per cent. in Egypt. So much for quantit quality is even more deplorable. The Comn Report, which devotes five long pages to ad quotations from high authorities on the inestimab of education, but says very little about what ele education should be in Egypt, outlines a vast an scheme which in twenty years would provide Egy 8,000 elementary schools and 30,000 teache meet the requirements of 80 per cent. of the bc 50 per cent. of the girls of school-going age—*i.e.*, six and eleven. In Egypt, however, as in many co it is a far cry from the recommendations of a to their execution, and the training of 30,000 t

is likely to prove an even more formidable task than the provision of 8,000 school buildings.

But if we have sacrificed popular to higher education, what have we to show to our credit in regard to the latter? In the broadest sense of the term, desperately little. We have concentrated our efforts on secondary schools and on the few higher colleges for law, medicine, engineering, and teaching, which existed for the most part before the Occupation, and we have done so mainly for the production—still quite inadequate—of Government officials. Even in this limited field the schools and colleges are insufficiently equipped and staffed. Classes overgrown beyond all possibility of real efficiency are still not large enough to satisfy the ever-increasing demand, for the Egyptian middle classes have been simply clamouring for education. In 1916 only 341 out of 619 youths who had passed the requisite examinations and were entitled to expect admission to the higher schools could be accommodated in them.

I will say nothing of the School of Law, as it is under the Ministry of Justice, nor of the more recently established School of Agriculture, which is under the Ministry of Agriculture. But the School of Medicine at Kasr-el-Aini in Cairo, the only one in Egypt—there is no School of Dentistry at all—is under the Ministry of Education. It is at the same time the only School of Pharmacy. Its diplomas are recognised in Europe, and it produces first-rate men. But its totally inadequate equipment only allows it to turn out fifty graduates a year, when the country requires hundreds. The average of annual applications for admission, all from young men with recognised educational qualifications, has been 149 for the last six years. For every applicant admitted four were turned back. For the School of Pharmacy the average was 38, and of these only one in four could find admission. Egypt meanwhile continues to be flooded with quack chemists of foreign nationality, who are free from all control or interference under cover of the Capitulations. Both

the School of Medicine and the Kasr-el-Aini Hospital are housed in an entirely obsolete building in which, according to the annual reports of visitors appointed by the Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons, the principles of modern sanitation and cleanliness may be taught but cannot be properly practised. After Sir Henry Morris's visit in 1913, the London Committee of those Colleges wrote: "They feel bound once more to express their disappointment that in spite of their repeated strong criticism, no steps have been taken to provide a modern hospital on up-to-date sanitary conditions, capable of affording a thorough medical and sanitary education." This pungent criticism is passed altogether in silence in the Report of the British Adviser to the Ministry of Education for 1913—the last Report issued before the war interrupted publication—though he takes good care to say that Sir Henry Morris expressed himself as generally pleased with the teaching and examinations. On this point there have never been any two opinions. Dr. Owen Richards has an admirable and devoted staff, both English and Egyptian, and they are doing excellent work. But official neglect has handicapped them too heavily.

The training of native teachers under the Ministry of Education has been no less inadequate. The one higher training college, rightly described by the Educational Adviser as "the most important educational institution in the country," had 235 students in 1913 and could not meet the increasing applications for admission, because the building in which it was located was not only old and dilapidated and constantly needed extensive and costly repairs to keep it habitable, but left no room for further expansion. There is no real Egyptian University, though there is an institution, founded in 1909, which calls itself by that high-sounding name. It is an outcome of the Nationalist movement of that period, and Saad Pasha Zaghlul is one of those who took the keenest interest in it. But there has been no generous response from the Egyptian public. Its diplomas are not recognised. The few

courses of lectures it can afford to provide are very sparsely attended, though it is worth noting that a distinguished Spanish Orientalist, Conte V. de Golanza, has succeeded in attracting half a dozen students from El Azhar to a course of lectures delivered by him in Arabic on Western philosophy, one year on Pascal and another year on Kant. A Government Commission got as far as the drawing up of a preliminary report on the creation of a State University, and the higher schools, if properly developed, should provide a sound working nucleus. Neither a good literary education nor a scientific education in such subjects as analytical chemistry or zoology or astronomy—and where are there better conditions for the study of the heavens ?—is to be had to-day, under Government auspices, in Egypt. A serious effort has yet to be made to provide for the study of Oriental languages or of Egyptian archæology, though Cairo is the ideal centre for both. Commercial and technical schools were at last started about ten years ago in response to a public demand too long ignored. They have been a step in the right direction, but they, too, are already suffering from overcrowding and from the dearth of competent teachers.

One of the most disastrous results of the failure of Government to foresee or to keep pace with the rush for education that has followed the development and growing prosperity of the country has been the multiplication of indigenous "private" schools. They are called "private" because, though they can send up their pupils for State examinations, they are entirely free from all State control unless they receive a grant-in-aid. Many of these "private" schools are mere squalid speculations or worse, for anyone can open a school in Egypt without the slightest test of character or educational qualifications. There has been talk at times of making a law which would subject the opening of any school to a licence from the Ministry of Education, but so long as the Capitulations are in force it would be practically impossible to extend

it to foreigners, and those Egyptians who had good reasons for evading its provisions would, as they constantly do in regard to many dubious avocations, shelter their interests behind the names of men of straw enjoying foreign protection. As things are to-day, low fees and no inquiries as to the boy's capacity or antecedents appeal too often to the ignorant Egyptian parent.

On the other hand, many Egyptian parents of the better classes have discovered by painful experience that if the intellectual training in the Government schools is poor, the training of character has been still more neglected. For that reason they prefer to send their children to the "foreign" schools—especially to the French schools—where a higher moral standard and far better discipline are combined with more thorough teaching. These institutions receive large subventions from their Governments, and they are entirely independent of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, whose officers are not entitled to set foot inside their doors. The only British institution of that sort is the excellent Victoria College in Alexandria, which never received any assistance from the British Government, and owes its existence—still only too precarious—to the public spirit of the community and the generosity of a few munificent patrons.

No doubt, even if much better provision had been made for Western education in Egypt, many Egyptians would have desired to complete their studies in Europe. But, in the absence of such provision, Egyptians who want to give their sons a really good education are almost compelled to send them abroad, and to send them at an age when they are dangerously accessible to the worst rather than to the best influences of European surroundings entirely alien to them.

It may be said in extenuation of the present educational system that we did not create it, but found it already in existence at the time of the Occupation. It dates back in part to Mehemet Ali and his French advisers, and his primary object undoubtedly was, just as was Macaulay's

in India, to train up young natives for employment in Government offices and administrative services. Nor have the majority of Egyptians yet got beyond the stage of looking upon education as the avenue that leads to Government employment. Unfortunately, we allowed that conception to go on dominating primary and secondary education, and up to 1916 the award of a Primary Education Certificate sufficed to qualify its recipient for appointment to Government service. "Many parents," the Educational Adviser confessed in his Report for 1913, "were thereby led through mistaken pride to send their children to Primary Schools without any hope of continuing their education beyond that stage, in the belief that they would thus open to them a career of reputed respectability in an office. Large numbers of youths were thus diverted from their natural career in agriculture or industry, and found themselves eventually, on completing the Primary course or after failing to complete it, without any prospect of obtaining the kind of employment that they hoped for, and estranged from their own surroundings and parental influences." The remedy that was devised was to abolish the Primary School Certificate examination and substitute for it an Entrance Examination, known as Part I, for admission to Secondary Schools. This remedy only aggravated the evil, for it simply provoked a rush for this Entrance Examination, which has led to a tremendous overcrowding of the old schools and the opening of a large number of new private schools of a very low type, and to the steady deterioration of secondary education itself.

During the absence in England of the late Educational Adviser his *locum tenens* published a Report on the results for the last ten years of the Secondary School examinations which suddenly poured a flood of lurid light on to the dark places of the system. It showed up the absolute worthlessness of most of the Egyptian "private" schools and exhibited the Government schools as only some degrees better. In the examinations known

as Part I only 314 passed out of 849 who presented themselves on the English side from Government schools, and from the schools merely under Government inspection only 309 passed out of 2,020, whilst from private schools not under inspection only 264 out of 1,824, or barely 14 per cent. From two large "private" schools in Cairo that sent up over 400 candidates between them about half failed to reach the minimum in either arithmetic or algebra or geometry, and a good proportion did not even get a single mark. In the examinations known as Part II the results were very similar; 225 out of 438, or 51 per cent., passed from Government schools, whilst only 158 passed out of 527 from other schools merely under inspection, and 63 out of 236 from "private" schools not under inspection. Subject after subject was passed in gloomy review, and in their final conclusions the examiners, commenting on the year's "catastrophe," declared the root of the evil to lie, not only in the uncontrolled increase of numbers sent up by "private" schools, where the teachers are often "unqualified, ill-paid and occasionally corrupt," but also "in the lack of commonsense, in the absence of any reasoning power, in the dull, mechanical repetition of memorised facts, in the want of interest and practical intelligence"—defects only less marked in the Government schools than in the "private" schools, and apparently not confined to the pupils alone. The charts which accompany the report show the general decline in efficiency to have been going on steadily for years, whilst the numbers have been constantly going up. Can any more damning verdict be conceived on a system of which examinations have been the Alpha and the Omega?

Egyptian education has, no doubt, been handicapped by the language question. Before the Occupation French was the chief teaching language. English has not yet entirely displaced it. As soon as the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 diminished the acute rivalry between French and English, the Egyptians began to agitate for

more instruction in the vernacular, and Arabic has now become the chief teaching medium. But the difficulty with Arabic is that the vernacular differs very widely from the literary tongue, which is that of the Koran. Mahomedan influence clings to the latter and would fain have every text-book written in it, which is much like requiring of an English text-book on aviation that no word be used which cannot be justified out of Chaucer. The scientific text-books suffer most, but the study of Arabic itself tends to slip to the ground between the two stools of the literary and vulgar tongues. European teachers are naturally prone to hold the change largely responsible for the steady retrogression in the Secondary Schools. The arguments in favour of making the language of the country the vehicle for instruction are admittedly very strong. But, unfortunately, there is very little modern literature of any value in Arabic, and youths who under the present system do not learn enough English or French to get any pleasure out of English or French literature feed chiefly on vernacular newspapers more exciting than edifying. Only in one thing does the Western education they are supposed to receive in Government schools impress its stamp upon all. The boys are all obliged to wear European clothes, far less clean and far less suitable to the climate than their own native dress.

The British teaching staff, amongst whom are to be found some of the severest critics of the whole system imposed upon them, is often harshly taken to task by Egyptians. The service would probably have been less open to attack if men had been specially recruited for it from the beginning. But for a long time the best amongst those who joined it were promptly switched off into the other public services. When the war broke out, most of the British and French teachers went off to fight or to do war work, and at a critical moment the European element in the schools was reduced to a minimum. Then during the last twelve months the Egyptian teaching

staff, congenitally slow to enforce ordinary discipline, has in many cases directly contributed to the complete breakdown of all discipline under the incitements of political agitation.

We have, unhappily, no more reason to be proud of our record of female than of male education. It shows an even worse failure to foresee, or to keep pace with, the growing demand. The proportion of illiteracy amongst the women of Egypt is still appalling. Only three per 1,000 knew how to read or write at the time of the last census in 1907, and the fraction is still probably well under one per cent. But the movement in favour of female education, which started in the upper classes, has been spreading downwards, and the old prejudice against it is dying out even in the rural districts.

The Egyptian girls who are receiving some sort of instruction to-day in schools of all kinds under the management or inspection of the Ministry of Education number roughly 50,000. This is more than double the number in 1910, but it still represents only 6 per cent. of the total number of girls of school-going age. In addition to these, another 20,000 are receiving instruction in Egyptian "private" schools, and the girls' "private" schools have even a worse reputation than those for boys. In one place a girls' school was started by a woman of notoriously bad character. As she was an Egyptian subject, sufficient pressure was brought to bear upon her to give up her seminary for young ladies, though there is no law that could have forced her to do so. Had she been a foreign subject, or a "foreign protected" subject, it might have been still more difficult to deal with her. As in the case of their sons, many of the most respectable Egyptian parents prefer for their daughters the schools conducted by foreign religious communities and especially by French nuns.

The girls' schools under the Ministry of Education are even more overcrowded than the boys' schools. Many of them have long waiting lists. They are wretchedly

housed. Money for new school buildings was doled out grudgingly before the war, and now the whole housing problem is as acute in Egypt as at home. The question of high schools for girls has scarcely yet been approached, and the only training college for other than elementary teachers contains just ninety students. Yet the supply of qualified teachers for the better-class girls' schools is a matter of no less urgency and difficulty than the provision of school buildings, for the strong feeling amongst Egyptians that the first business of a woman is to get married, and to get married early, militates very much against teaching as a profession that does not favour marriage. Elementary education, in which also the Provincial Councils are beginning to take an intelligent interest, is still absolutely in its infancy and almost entirely confined to the old native *maktahs*, with just the most sorely needed improvements in their very primitive curriculum and squalid premises. The most promising feature is that of the 3,600 *maktahs* at present under Government inspection, 45—a little more than one in 100—have been set apart for girls only, and in these a large proportion of the teaching staff has now been trained in the Bulak Elementary Training College. Only six years ago the Ministry of Education had to admit that a good many of the women teachers in the *maktahs* were themselves unable to read and write!

If we have made such a poor job of Egyptian education, the great underlying cause is only too clear. There have been very few Englishmen in responsible positions in Egypt who have ever paid more than lip-worship to the importance of education. In the early days of the Occupation rigid economy had to be enforced everywhere in order to meet a financial situation that seemed almost desperate. But those lean years are now remote, and education still continues to be treated with stepmotherly parsimony.

Our whole educational policy lacked inspiration. It was left almost entirely in the hands of a British Adviser

to the Ministry of Education whose good intentions and indefatigable industry were beyond dispute, but whose horizon remained that of his early pedagogic training. None could fail to respect him, but his methods stand condemned by the results. With his many excellent if somewhat dour qualities, he had a narrowly utilitarian conception of his task, believing in quantity rather than quality. Tied overmuch to his office desk, whence he issued innumerable rules and regulations, he was seldom, if ever, it would appear, disposed to consult or to consider outside opinion—least of all Egyptian opinion. He kept the machinery of education and its results to himself, and it is because of this secrecy that the publication, during his absence, of the Report which for the first time told the Egyptian parents the whole truth with regard to their boys, as shown in the results of the examinations that for most of them are the be-all and end-all of education, fell on them like a bomb-shell. How little they are themselves capable of realising its true significance they have shown by venting their first resentment in a demand that the standards of examination should at once be lowered.

Wiser conclusions are, however, beginning to be drawn, and they should be assisted by the appointment of a new Educational Adviser, Mr. Paterson, who, though he has had very little professional experience and only in the first years of his career in Egypt, has gained general and genuine popularity amongst Egyptians, as well as Europeans, as an able and broad-minded official in the Finance Department. It must be hoped that, before starting on new experiments, Mr. Paterson will institute a careful inquiry into the whole educational system required for a country such as Egypt is. Sir Thomas Sadler's Commission, which, though technically limited to the Calcutta University, has probed many of the wider problems of Indian education, has shown how the best native opinion can be rallied to the cause of sound education by giving a full and patient hearing to Indian witnesses and justi-

fying out of their own mouths the conclusions embodied in its exhaustive and illuminating Report. The problem of Western education in Egypt is far less complex, and with the help of a man of Sir Thomas Sadler's experience, Mr. Paterson and one or two leading Egyptians should have little difficulty in conducting an inquiry which would place its solution on a new and sounder basis. We should then at least have done our best to discharge one of our great responsibilities—one which we have hitherto treated with culpable indifference.

Western education, even if it can be raised on to a higher plane, will for a long time to come have to contend with powerful and profoundly antagonistic forces of which our own acquired habits of religious tolerance make it difficult for us to grasp the reality. One of the most stubborn facts we have to reckon with in Egypt is that the ancient school or university of El Azhar still remains, with its offshoots in the provinces, the great Mahomedan educational agency which moulds the character and outlook of a considerably greater number of young Egyptians than all the primary and secondary schools and colleges modelled on Western lines. Its most brilliant days belong to that short period when Arab civilisation, absorbing the remnants of Greco-Byzantine and Persian civilisation, kept the torch of ancient learning alight which had almost flickered out in the darkness of the Middle Ages in Europe. Its intellectual decay followed, as in the rest of the Mahomedan world, when mere scholasticism of the narrowest type destroyed such germs of evolutionary vitality as Islam may have originally possessed. But the influence of El Azhar as a stronghold of Mahomedan orthodoxy continued none the less to grow, and it gradually overshadowed and absorbed all the other seats of Mahomedan learning in Egypt, or brought them into subordinate affiliation with itself, like those of Tanta and Alexandria and a few others of less importance. Its position has seldom been more dominant than it is to-day as the rallying

point of Mahomedan sentiment, and it has played so important a part in the various phases through which the Egyptian Nationalist movement has passed, that the nature of the intellectual and moral training which its students undergo deserves more notice than it generally receives.

Most visitors to Cairo in more tranquil days will remember the venerable, if rather dilapidated, pile of buildings, partially restored some twenty years ago, which opens on to narrow and crowded streets behind the Muski in the heart of the old native city. It has grown up in the course of nearly ten centuries round the Mosque called El Azhar—"the blossoming"—which was built by one of the Fatimite Khalifs in 970, and set aside for the use of students. Through the Barbers' Gate a long vaulted passage leads into a large sun-bathed quadrangular court with a basin for ceremonial ablutions in the centre, and surrounded by deep pillared arcades. This courtyard is the threshold of the great seat of Mahomedan learning which, with its affiliated offshoots, attracts more than 13,000 students duly enrolled mostly from Egypt, but also in smaller numbers from the most remote parts of the world of Islam, besides another 10,000 whose attendance is more casual—young boys and youths, and grown-up men and, not long ago, even greybeards. Under the latest regulations issued in 1911, the limit of age for admission is between ten and seventeen, but as the complete course of studies lasts fifteen years and in exceptional cases more, most of them are approaching middle life before they leave El Azhar, and many of them have married either before or soon after entering it, the usual age for marrying being fifteen or sixteen. In the great courtyard the students lie about on mats, some sleeping, some eating, some reciting aloud from their text-books in a rhythmical sort of chant to which their swaying bodies keep time. Water carriers and itinerant food sellers and hawkers of all kinds move freely amongst them, swelling the din of voices with their

traditional street cries. The *muezzin's* call to prayer from one of the lofty minarets of the adjoining mosque is the signal for the students to stream into the sanctuary, an immense hall of which the low and time-blackened roof is borne on over a hundred columns. Each of the four great rites, or schools of theology, into which orthodox Sunni Mahomedanism has been divided since the second century of the *Hejira*, has its own *Kibleh* pointing to Mecca for worshippers to turn to at prayer-time. The students as they enter split up into different groups and move towards the one of the 126 columns which the teacher at whose feet they elect to sit has made his own. With their legs crossed under them and their shoes deposited behind them, they crouch round the teacher, whose audience fluctuates with his popularity. He does not indeed always lecture, as we understand lectures, but confines himself to answering any questions put to him by the students, who in turn read out from the text-book of which each one has a copy in his hand. When El Azhar overflows, similar scenes may be witnessed in other mosques appointed for the purpose. These sittings, which have now been shortened, still take up seven hours of the student's day.

The object of El Azhar education was defined in the Law of 1911 to be "the maintenance of the *Sheria* (the Mahomedan Sacred Law) by imparting sound knowledge of the sciences relating to it and by forming a body of *ulema* (men learned in the Sacred Law) competent to give religious instruction and to discharge the public functions connected with the administration of the *Sheria* for the guidance of the people into the path of happiness." Now, as the *Sheria* is an immutable law based upon the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet, it is upon these that the whole course of studies centres. No student is admitted who, besides reading and writing sufficiently to study the text-books, cannot recite half the Koran by heart. Blind students, who in a land of ophthalmia are so numerous as to form a separate and important group,

are required to know the whole Koran by heart. The list of subjects that form the curriculum is significant. They are divided into three sections. The first, or religious section, comprises the art of intoning the Koran, exegesis of the Koran, the Traditions of the Prophet and their terminology, monotheism, Mahomedan law and the philosophy of legislation, Mahomedan jurisprudence and its juridical principles, religious morals, the life of the Prophet, the drawing up of legal documents and judicial procedure according to the *Sheria.* The second section is called that of philological science, and immense importance is attached to it owing to the Mahomedan belief in the textual revelation of the Koran which came down from Heaven in its Arabic form, every word and every letter of which is equally sacred. It comprises grammar and the science of the formation of words, morphology, elocution, rhetoric, the ornaments of style, Arabic literature, composition, prosody, rhyme, calligraphy, dictation and reading. The third section is called that of mathematical and other sciences, and as it was considered desirable to introduce some rudiments of modern learning, it comprises in a strange medley logic, the art of discussion, arithmetic, geometry, drawing, algebra, history, geography, the "lessons of things," the properties of bodies, hygiene, natural history, cosmography, the calculation of time, administrative and judicial organisation, and theoretical and practical pedagogy. The relative value of these different subjects in the eyes of El Azhar authorities can be gauged from the list of marks allotted to them for examination purposes, the maximum in the "modern" subjects being only half that obtainable in most of the old orthodox subjects, and only a nominal minimum being required in them in order to qualify for the certificates of learning awarded to successful students.

It is the study of these subjects that absorbs fifteen years of the student's life—a very strenuous life usually spent in cramped and unhealthy surroundings. Unless he lives at home in Cairo, he shares with other fellow

students a room in one of the dozen *riwak* or tenements—it would be misleading to call them colleges—assigned to Egyptian students according either to the province they come from or to the particular school of theology they affect. For some time, perhaps for two or three years, he has to support himself entirely. Then he passes from the waiting list on to the list of those privileged to share the modest bread rations, provided out of the bequests of pious patrons of old. In his erudite work on the Mahomedan universities of Egypt, M. Arminjon, a French professor at the Cairo School of Law, reproduces an account given to him by an El Azhar student of the way in which his days were spent :—

"I rise at dawn, and having made my ablutions and said my early prayers, I hurry off to El Azhar to attend the course of Traditions of the Prophet, which lasts until after sunrise. As soon as that is over the same teacher hears us on the Law and its philosophy for another two hours or more. I then go back to breakfast on the bread or rice and beans and lentils of which my family send me a provision every month. My repast finished, I return to El Azhar to study calligraphy until the hour of midday prayer, and then a course of grammar keeps me busy for another two hours, after which I retire to a corner of the courtyard with my room-mate Ahmed, and whilst we have a snack we rehearse the morning's lesson in law and prepare for the next day's. By that time it is the hour of afternoon prayer, and I go off to a neighbouring mosque where for the last year a professor teaches us arithmetic in European fashion with a black-board. Then back to El Azhar to prepare for a lesson in logic, which a venerable Sheikh, too infirm to move, gives us in his own house between the hours of sunset and evening prayer. Having said the last prayer for the day at El Azhar, I and my room-mates rush back to our house, eat our supper, sit for a while talking, and then retire to sleep."

Asked if he never made time for any amusements and never went to any theatre or café, he replied :

"I should never set foot in such places as our holy religion prohibits, but on Thursday afternoon, which we have free, I go with some of my fellow-students to the *Hammam*, and then we take a walk into the country and come back at dusk

through [illegible] in which a *moolid*, or religious festival, is being [illegible] the festoons of lights, buy a few sweets, and listen [illegible] the tents to the reading of religious poems or of the [illegible] Koran. Friday's day of rest I devote to visiting my friends.

During the vacation he went home to his family, with whom he had to leave his wife as he could not afford to bring her to Cairo. Not all students are as austere, but physical exercise and games no more enter into their minds than European forms of recreation.

And what do these dreary years of study profit the El Azhar student's mind? All the canons of Mahomedan Sacred Law having been laid down by the great doctors who founded the four different schools of theology—schools which differ only in their processes of codification and not in the spirit of the codes common to all—the teaching is essentially formal and tends to develop the memory rather than the reasoning powers of the student. For instance, the study of the Traditions of the Prophet turns mainly upon an accurate knowledge of the successive authorities for the accuracy of each Tradition as the "links" in the chain of witnesses through whom it is traced back to the mouth of the Prophet himself, i.e., the companions of the Prophet, those who received them from his companions, and so on down to the time when they were finally, and for all time, embodied in the form in which they came to be accepted and are still accepted as beyond any more possibility of doubt than the Koran itself. Or take the study of Arabic grammar, which, in view of the textual sanctity of the Koran, is regarded as the corner stone of all Islamic learning. It bulks very large in the first eight years of the student's curriculum. It teaches him the meaning and explains to him the form of every word used in the sacred book, and therefore capable of being used in any orthodox Mahomedan work. But he never learns how to write an original composition, or what is the origin of the Arabic language or its relationship to other Semitic

languages. In the case of the vast majority of students, their minds never emerge from this atmosphere of paralysing formalism. It would be surprising if they did. To some, no doubt, Nature has given sufficient intellectual power and independence of character to break away from this barren scholasticism. In former times such men founded new schools of thought which were denounced by the orthodox as heresies and placed beyond the pale of Islam.

In more recent times a few, like the late Sheikh Mohamed Abdu at El Azhar, have striven for a sufficient elasticity at least of interpretation to reconcile the old dogmas with the intellectual and social needs of the modern world. Their influence has seemed at times to be considerable, but the promise of any real reforming movement which it may have held out has hitherto been very imperfectly fulfilled, perhaps because it is of the essence of Islam that it should be incapable of fulfilment. The best that can be said for El Azhar is that the most distinguished of its students, besides being fine Arabic scholars, leave it with a genuine sense of the dignity and responsibility attaching to their learning, however narrow its limitations, which is reflected not merely in their grave deportment, but often in the sedate rectitude of their lives as good and earnest Mahomedans. More frequently, however, it is to be feared, the average El Azhar student carries away with him chiefly a religious arrogance which, rooted in the belief that the world belongs by rights to Islam, resents all forms of progress emanating from Western civilisation and readily translates itself into aggressive fanaticism.

A school of Kadis, or judges in the Courts administering the Sacred Law, was founded in Lord Cromer's time independently of El Azhar, but there is now a movement for reincorporation with it, and the lawyers who practise in those Courts as well as the whole staff of *employés* connected with them and with the Ministry of Wakf (Mahomedan Pious Foundations) are all drawn from El Azhar. It is El Azhar that provides throughout Egypt

the notaries public, whose services are constantly needed in all domestic matters that come under personal law, and it should provide all the preachers and officiating clergy of the mosques, if rank jobbery did not often override even the privileges of a great religious institution. Its influence, always great in Cairo, spreads into the remotest villages. It has always been a power in the land. In the old days of the Mameluke Sultans it sometimes made or unmade them, and when Bonaparte landed in Egypt he addressed himself to the Sheikhs of El Azhar and not to the temporal rulers of the country, and held them responsible for the great rising which took place a few months later in the capital. It was they again who in 1805 expelled the last Pasha sent from Constantinople to represent the Ottoman Sultan, and set up Mehemet Ali in his place, who never forgot altogether what he owed to them, even when he realised that the archaic education given at El Azhar could no longer supply the needs of the more modern State which he was bent on creating. Ismail himself, though his religion sat light on him, always had doles for El Azhar. During the early years of the Occupation, the number of its students decreased perceptibly and its influence seemed for a time to be waning. But it revived with the revival of Egyptian Nationalism.

Lord Cromer, who was always at pains to keep his finger on the pulse of the Egyptian people, saw the importance of establishing some contact with an institution that played so large a part in moulding Mahomedan thought. Any direct interference would have incurred deep suspicion as an intrusion upon a strictly Mahomedan preserve, but he gave whatever indirect support he could to the small group of men who, like Mohamed Abdu, were anxious to introduce a new and more liberal spirit into the ancient precincts of El Azhar and gave his active sympathy credit for being entirely free from sectarian *arrière-pensées*. Mohamed Abdu died. Lord Cromer left Egypt, and neither of his successors took

the same interest in the matter. Nor would it have accorded with their policy of giving a freer hand to the Khedive to attempt to check him when he sought to tighten his own hold over El Azhar. Upon Abbas, too, his religion sat very light indeed, but he had been quick to perceive the uses to which he could put his authority, as head of the State, over El Azhar, both to enhance his own prestige and to turn Mahomedan feeling against the British control. A law passed in 1898 had done something to place the functions and powers of the governing body on a sounder basis and to regulate the course of studies and the tests to be applied for the granting of certificates of proficiency. Another law framed under the Khedive's close supervision was passed in 1911, which made a great show of introducing modern features into the curriculum and further reforms into the government of the University. But the most important clause of all was that which reserved the choice and appointment of the Rector to the Khedive alone. Its whole tenor bore out the old Egyptian saying: "If the head of the State is a strong man, he rules El Azhar, but if he is a weak man, El Azhar rules him." And with all his faults Abbas was a strong man.

We have lately witnessed the truth of that saying in the other alternative, when, with a Sultan on the throne of Egypt who owes his nomination to the British Protectorate, the governing body of El Azhar, of which the Sultan is the recognised chief, issued a manifesto boldly denouncing the Protectorate and endorsing all the demands of the Party of Independence. To-day the Azharites, who a few years ago were derided as hopelessly *vieux jeu* by the more "advanced" students of the Government schools and colleges, are welcomed by them once more as brother patriots in every Nationalist demonstration, and El Azhar itself has become the chief centre of anti-British agitation. But it would not be fair to attribute the revolt of El Azhar solely to religious or social animosity. It has never felt the pinch of poverty so severely as

during the recent extravagant rise in prices of all the necessaries of life, and especially of the staple articles of native food. The vast majority of its students are extremely poor. Its professors receive the merest pittance. Their average salaries are under £5 a month. The ex-Khedive promised that they should be raised and was able to put down his failure to redeem that promise to the parsimony of British financial control. He knew when to be generous to those in authority whose support he required for his own purposes, but he had no wish to raise the University as a whole to a position of greater financial independence. Its resources are still totally inadequate. Its income only amounts to £E.72,000 a year—a subvention of £E.18,000 from the State and £E.54,000 from trusts administered by the Wakf. The governing body is now moving for a very large increase, amounting to no less than £172,000 altogether, in the yearly grants made to it out of the Egyptian Budget. The demand may be excessive, and in the present temper of El Azhar it may well have been pitched so high merely to court a refusal which will constitute a fresh grievance against the British controlling power. But whatever their resentment of the hostile attitude adopted by El Azhar and of its unjustifiable intrusion into the domain of politics, those who are responsible for British policy would do well to remember that it is just as shortsighted to starve Mahomedan as to starve Western education in Egypt, and that El Azhar represents forces which in the present state of Islamic discontent outside as well as inside Egypt we can only continue to ignore at our peril.

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CHAPTER XIV

A BARREN PERIOD OF DRIFT

EVEN the violence and suddenness of the March outbreak and the grave disorder in the body politic of Egypt, of which the prolonged strike of Government officials was only one of the outward symptoms, did not suffice to bring home to the British Government the urgency of coming out into the open with a considered policy. It was not till the middle of May that they were persuaded to break the silence which they had maintained ever since the proclamation of the Protectorate. Even then they made no definite statement of policy. A good deal was said about the "immense responsibility" taken upon themselves by the Egyptian leaders "who had precipitated this unhappy crisis," but very little about official blunders and procrastination at home and in Egypt which had equally contributed to precipitate the crisis. An avowal rather than an explanation was vouchsafed of the refusal to allow two members of the Egyptian Government to come to England to confer with British Ministers, and a perfunctory admission was made that during the war there had been "a certain amount of mishandling of difficult native questions by inexperienced officers." Parliament was at any rate definitely informed that Lord Milner would proceed to Egypt at the head of "a strong mission" to inquire into the causes of the recent outbreak and to draw up recommendations which would assist the British Government in

during the recent extravagant rise in prices of all the necessaries of life, and especially of the staple articles of native food. The vast majority of its students are extremely poor. Its professors receive the merest pittance. Their average salaries are under £5 a month. The ex-Khedive promised that they should be raised and was able to put down his failure to redeem that promise to the parsimony of British financial control. He knew when to be generous to those in authority whose support he required for his own purposes, but he had no wish to raise the University as a whole to a position of greater financial independence. Its resources are still totally inadequate. Its income only amounts to £E.72,000 a year—a subvention of £E.18,000 from the State and £E.54,000 from trusts administered by the Wakf. The governing body is now moving for a very large increase, amounting to no less than £172,000 altogether, in the yearly grants made to it out of the Egyptian Budget. The demand may be excessive, and in the present temper of El Azhar it may well have been pitched so high merely to court a refusal which will constitute a fresh grievance against the British controlling power. But whatever their resentment of the hostile attitude adopted by El Azhar and of its unjustifiable intrusion into the domain of politics, those who are responsible for British policy would do well to remember that it is just as shortsighted to starve Mahomedan as to starve Western education in Egypt, and that El Azhar represents forces which in the present state of Islamic discontent outside as well as inside Egypt we can only continue to ignore at our peril.

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"shaping for the Protectorate a system of prudent an ever-enlarging enfranchisement" and in meeting "tl claims of the Egyptian people to a due and increasir share in the management of the affairs of Egypt."

The mere fact, however, that the Egyptian extremis were able to boast that even this belated announceme had only been wrung out of the British Ministers by explosion of violence, which had found them, as th confessed, totally unprepared, robbed it of much of value. Had even the Milner Mission followed hot-fc on this announcement the effect would have been mu greater. But nothing more was heard of it for montl and only towards the end of September was the compo tion of the Mission announced. Ample time had be given for the situation in Egypt to harden again, a though there was a lull on the surface, it was hardeni again steadily.

The formation of the new Ministry under Mohan Said Pasha in April and the return of Government offici to their work combined with a temporary reaction fr the fierce excitement of rebellion and repression create a somewhat calmer atmosphere in Cairo wh was perhaps quite as much due to the usual lassit induced by the return of the annual hot weather. T seat of agitation, however, had only been transferred the time being to Paris. The primary object of S Zaghlul and the Nationalist Delegation in proceed to Paris had been to seek a hearing for their case at Peace Conference. In this they failed, and the for recognition of the British Protectorate by the Ameri Government on April 22nd had been an even more disti blow to their hopes than Article 147 of the Treaty of V sailles was a couple of months later, when the Protecto was placed on record in an instrument signed by all Allied and Associated Powers as well as by Germa But the Delegation were not discouraged, and they car on a very active propaganda, which was not altoge unsuccessful, both in the European and in the Ameri

Press. Two prominent members ultimately proceeded to Washington, where they did their best, in co-operation with every other element hostile to the Peace Treaty and to Great Britain, to secure its rejection by the Senate, even at the risk of destroying also the League of Nations, upon which they sometimes professed to pin their faith.

It has been argued that Zaghlul committed a tactical blunder in never visiting London, where, while refraining from all contact with official circles, he might have made, through various channels, a direct and perhaps not entirely fruitless appeal to certain sections of the British democracy. But though he was probably shrewd enough not to overlook the advantages of such an appeal and was indeed willing to allow one of his friends to go to London, who was, however, refused a passport, he himself could hardly have gone without departing to some extent from the consistency of his attitude towards the "usurping" nation. He was not going to recede from the position he had taken up that Egypt was entitled to "complete independence" and that the Protectorate must be repealed. Our abortive attempt to intern him in Malta had served merely to fortify his determination and to enhance his prestige with his fellow-countrymen, in whose eyes he in fact bulked larger from Paris than if he had remained in Cairo. He doubtless realised also that as martial law was still in force in Egypt, he could count on greater freedom of action abroad, where he was beyond its grasp. One cannot but admire the dexterity with which he used Paris as a sounding-board for an even more sensational propaganda throughout the valley of the Nile than he had conducted before he left Egypt. Long messages in the native Press which gave highly coloured accounts of the Delegation's achievements in arousing the interest and sympathy of foreign countries were taken at their face value by the Egyptian public, which was gradually taught to look to Zaghlul, and to him alone, as the representative of the Egyptian nation destined to work out its future salvation. The Committee

which he had left behind him in Cairo received constant instructions from him and carried them out with unflagging zeal, whilst he showered his telegraphic blessings upon its achievements.

When the composition of the Milner Mission and its impending departure for Egypt were at last announced, it was from the Delegation that the *mot d'ordre* was given for boycotting it if it ventured to go out. I landed just then in Egypt—early in October, 1919—and found the boycott campaign already in full blast. When I left London, the few people who took any interest in Egyptian affairs were discussing the date which had not yet been definitely fixed for the Milner Mission to sail. When I reached Cairo a week later, the point that was being discussed there was whether its arrival might not prove the signal for fresh disturbances as grave as those of March and April. To the two popular catch-phrases, "Complete Independence" and "Down with the Protectorate," a third one had been added: "Down with the Milner Mission." The native Press wrote endless variations on it and dug out of Lord Milner's "England in Egypt," written more than a quarter of a century ago, just after he had retired from the Egyptian service, every phrase and every word which, snatched from its context, could create the impression that he had always been an inveterate detractor of Egypt, though the Egyptians who had seen him then at work knew him to be one of the best friends and ablest servants their country had had.

Public meetings, at which the Bar was conspicuous, were held to denounce the Mission, and as the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils were still closed down, their members held informal gatherings and dispatched fierce telegrams of protest to the Egyptian Ministers, to foreign Powers, to their representatives in Cairo, and, of course, to the Delegation in Paris, vowing that they would have nothing to do with the "accursed thing." Notables and Ulema followed suit, and the students of El Azhar and of the Government colleges,

the boys in the secondary and primary schools and even the girls' schools, in which the limit of age is between five and seven, joined in the boycott chorus. The native papers reproduced every day columns and columns of telegrams, all protesting in stereotyped phrases against the Mission. Any person of position who held aloof from the movement was liable to be published in the Press or even to see his house and his friends of students, whose remonstrances were not always limited to verbal abuse. Egyptian Ministers themselves did not escape, and it was in an interview with a group of noted agitators that the Prime Minister, Mohamed Said, was fain to declare that he had warned the British Government against sending the Milner Mission at an unfavourable circumstances, and that if it came out in spite of his warnings, he and his colleagues would resign. The Government in fact professed to wash its hands of the whole business, it was not concerned with politics and it only remained in office to carry on the administration of the country. Not that it even did that. Never had any Egyptian Government been left so free from all interference by the British controlling power; none had ever been so impotent; not for years had corruption and nepotism been so rampant, or crime so prevalent. Even such small official fry as the Omdehs, or village headmen, of whom there are 3,000 in Egypt, felt it was safe for them to shout with the crowd without asking for permission from their superior authorities, and from Paris Zaghlul publicly addressed to them a telegraphic round-robin of encouragement and approval. He controlled the policy of his party, and it was the only party that had any policy.

Very soon the agitation assumed a still more serious aspect, reminiscent of the March troubles. Whilst repression in the villages had dealt severely with the wretched *fellaheen* found guilty of participation in the actual outbreak of violence, most of the ringleaders in Cairo and elsewhere escaped scot-free as soon as, in

July, the "special courts" were abolished and the jurisdiction of the ordinary Egyptian tribunals revived. Even the witnesses who had given evidence before the special courts were no longer safe against vendetta. Schools and colleges again went out on strike, and there were threats of impending railway strikes and strikes amongst Government officials. Big processions reappeared in the streets of Cairo and of Alexandria, turbaned ulema from El Azhar and Effendis in European clothes, students and schoolboys galore, and always a large tail of mere rabble out for any mischief that might be going. And during the last weeks of October and the first weeks of November there was grave mischief in Alexandria. The Government, scenting danger, had forbidden street demonstrations, but the Extremists disregarded the prohibition and were able to do so at first with impunity. The British headquarters had wisely decided to keep the British troops as far as possible in the background whilst holding them in reserve, should the local authorities require their assistance in the event of grave disorder. On several occasions, however, British troops had to be sent in to reinforce the Egyptian police, and affrays occurred between them and the more truculent elements in the mob which led to some loss of life, unfortunately not always confined to the rioters. When shots are fired in the streets of a large city, there are almost inevitably some innocent victims. As to the spirit that moved some sections of the mob, the looting with which these riotous demonstrations almost invariably ended could leave no manner of doubt. It was anti-foreign, not merely anti-British. In fact it was Greek and Jewish shops that suffered most. But though the responsibility rested entirely with the leaders who organised and incited these demonstrations and then remained discreetly in the background, the Nationalists filled the native Press and loaded the cable lines to Europe and America with sensational accounts of Egyptian men, women, and children being brutally shot down by British

soldiers whilst peacefully assembled to assert their national rights.

The last and most serious of these riots, though it was not accompanied by looting, took place near Abdeen Palace on November 16th, on the day of Sultan Fuad's return to the capital from his summer residence near Alexandria. The mob attacked and set fire to a police station close to the Palace and to another in the Muski, the old street well known to tourists which leads to the native bazaars. The Egyptian police did its best to hold its ground, but it was overpowered and British troops had to intervene. There were nearly a hundred killed and wounded amongst the rioters before they were finally dispersed. Yet on this as on other similar occasions the mob would in one place see red and break out into acts of brutal violence; in another place, perhaps quite near by, it would good-humouredly refrain from molesting in any way the few Englishmen whom curiosity or business brought into contact with it. The Egyptian sometimes seems to be like a child, easily moved to wrath and to laughter, and just as unaccountably to the one or to the other.

That the self-appointed leaders of the nation, who must be credited with knowing their people, could not resist the temptation to play with fire, and indeed provided the inflammable materials, was indeed one of the most striking proofs of their own political immaturity. Some of them would admit that to allow demonstrations for freedom and independence to degenerate into riots in which foreigners' shops were smashed and foreigners' heads were broken irrespective of nationality was hardly the best way to inspire confidence abroad in the capacity of a self-governing Egypt to safeguard the interests of the foreign communities within her gates. They would admit that for the Bar to go on strike and oblige the Courts to suspend their proceedings until it pleased the barristers to resume their pleadings was not calculated to enhance public respect for the law. They would agree that the

importation of politics into the schools was bound to demoralise the rising generation as well as to interfere disastrously with their immediate course of studies; and that in their anxiety to subvert British authority they ran the risk of subverting the whole principle of authority, beginning with that of parents in their own families. But the perfunctory regrets they sometimes expressed for such trifling blemishes on a splendid demonstration of national solidarity showed that with all their capacity for organisation, their dialectical resourcefulness and their tenacity of purpose, they were like children in their complete inability to see things as they are.

That demonstration was to reach its climax in the celebration on November 13th of the first "anniversary of Egyptian Independence," as if it had been actually achieved and placed for all time beyond dispute by the visit to Sir Reginald Wingate on November 13th, 1918, when, two days after the Armistice, Saad Zaghlul and his friends had first put forward the claims of the Party of Independence. The proposed demonstration ended in an almost grotesque anticlimax. There was scarcely any response to the exhortations of the native Press, which had surpassed itself in its endeavour to tune up popular feeling by lengthy and lyrical leaders. In view of the recent unfortunate occurrences in Alexandria, the Egyptian Government had renewed the prohibition of street demonstrations, and this time it was only disregarded by small groups of Egyptian women and by bands of schoolboys, who stayed away from school and vied with the ladies in storming tramcars and giving vent to their vociferous patriotism in free "parade" and much flag-wagging. Some of the women found themselves ultimately stranded in unfamiliar parts of the city and had to be escorted home, tired out and weeping, by the police. The result for the boys was perhaps less distasteful to them than to their parents. As they had absented themselves without leave, the Government

schools were closed against them for a week as a disciplinary punishment.

One was sometimes tempted to ascribe to a strain of African blood in the Egyptian people the sort of hysteria which seemed to run through all this period of wild political excitement just as it runs through the religious frenzy of "revivalist" campaigns amongst the coloured folk in the United States. But whatever may have been the case in remote ages before the dawn of history, there is very little purely African blood in the Egyptians of to-day, and if there was much to perplex and repel one in the methods of agitation which the Nationalist leaders tolerated or encouraged, there was a background of earnestness and a faith in the righteousness of their cause which had to be seriously reckoned with. I found them as a rule ready and anxious to talk, and indeed grateful for any opportunity of placing their case before the British public. Some of those whom I saw had been with Zaghlul in Paris as members of the Delegation. Though they objected to be called "Extremists," or even "Nationalists," on the ground that national unity of sentiment on all essentials had rendered party nomenclature obsolete, their views could certainly be taken as representing those of the most stalwart exponents of Egyptian Nationalism, and it is only fair that I should set them forth as faithfully as the frankness and courtesy with which they expressed them to me deserve. I need not again dwell upon their stock-arguments in support of Egypt's claim to complete independence which they drew from our repeated promises that the Occupation would only be temporary, from our more recent declarations during the Great War that it was being waged to give freedom to small nations, and from our proclaimed adhesion to the doctrine of self-determination and to President Wilson's Fourteen Points. Nor need I expatiate again upon their resentment of the British policy of silence as to the meaning and purpose of the Protectorate, by which, during the war, we forcibly modified the

status of Egypt and gave her a new ruler without vouchsafing any explanation to her people or taking into our confidence the representative bodies with which we had ourselves endowed her.

Though they often seemed to have entirely misread the history of their own country and to remain wilfully blind to all considerations arising out of the new political situation created in Europe by the war, they had carefully followed every word uttered in England which could reinforce their arguments. Thus they quoted to me with great zest against the maintenance of our Protectorate over Egypt, not only our recognition of the independence of the new Hedjaz Kingdom, but also the language in which Lord Curzon, when he explained the purpose of the new Anglo-Persian Convention, emphatically repudiated any idea of a British Protectorate over Persia as out of the question, since neither party would ever have consented to it. How could England therefore inflict a Protectorate upon unconsenting Egyptians who may well claim to have reached at least as high a plane of progress, civilisation, and power as modern Persia, and a much higher one than the subjects of the King of the Hedjaz?

The demand for independence was not, however, they asserted, a mere matter of national *amour propre*. Independence was essential to the introduction of those democratic institutions which the example of England herself had taught Egyptians to value. Without independence they could never hope to have a national Government solely responsible to an elected popular assembly, with the head of the State bound down to the functions of a strictly constitutional ruler. If it were argued that Egypt was quite unripe for such democratic institutions, was she more so, they retorted, than Greece and Serbia and Bulgaria and many other nations had been not so very long ago, who, in spite of many blunders, had found in the practice of democracy the only real road to national freedom and progress?

An independent Egypt, they hastened to add, would

not at all mean an Egypt unfriendly to Great Britain. She would always need the friendship of Great Britain, who on her side would be quite entitled to require from Egypt the recognition of her Imperial interests in a country which lies athwart her highways of Empire and must always be at the mercy of her overwhelming power. Let Great Britain act up to her principles and to her promises; declare the Protectorate to have been, as Egyptians were fain to believe at the time, a merely temporary war measure; show that the war, in which the Egyptians themselves rendered very substantial services, was waged to give freedom to them as well as to the other small nations it had liberated; and recognise their title to independence. Then, once that principle admitted, Egypt would welcome a treaty of alliance with Great Britain in which specific guarantees could be embodied for British strategical interests in the Suez Canal, for the fulfilment of Egypt's financial obligations, and for the maintenance of foreign trade and industry and the security of the foreign communities in Egypt.

Nor should the ending of British domination involve in their opinion the withdrawal of British help in the progressive development of Egypt. She would still require, as Japan did for many years, the assistance of foreign coadjutors, and especially of technical and scientific experts in many branches of her administration, and she would certainly seek them in England rather than in any other foreign country. Many of the Englishmen who were here to-day would unquestionably be invited to remain. But they would be the servants and not the masters of the Egyptian Government, just as the foreigners employed in Japan were the servants and not the masters of the Japanese Government.

Some of these may have been purely *ad captandum* arguments, and it was difficult to reconcile the assurances which accompanied them that there was no real ill-feeling towards England or towards Englishmen with the extreme bitterness and hostility displayed every day

in the Egyptian Press and in popular demonstrations resulting not infrequently in acts of violence which none of the leaders had the courage to condemn or the power to restrain. But it was at any rate a hopeful sign that for many influential Egyptians, including not only former Ministers who had served in the Rushdi Cabinet, but also some of the less intemperate followers of Saad Pasha Zaghlul, the main issue still appeared to be the withdrawal of the hateful word Protectorate and the substitution for the status of dependency, unilaterally imposed during the war, of a bilateral contract which should secure essential British interests and at the same time recognise the principle of Egyptian independence. Many Englishmen and even Anglo-Egyptian officials were not unfavourably inclined to some such accommodation. The term Protectorate was doubtless a very elastic one, but it had to be admitted that no precedent could be found for its use which did not involve a measure of subjugation almost incompatible with any real autonomy such as Egypt would have been entitled to expect even if we had actually incorporated her into the British Empire by formal annexation. The Arabic word *Himaya* into which the English word Protectorate had been translated was singularly ill-chosen, for it is the same word that is used to connote the status of "protected foreign subjects" in Egypt, *i.e.*, of people who are not really foreign born—not real Englishmen, or Frenchmen, or Italians, etc.—but have acquired or inherited rights to foreign protection by processes unknown in any European State. Those rights, it must be confessed, often have a somewhat tainted origin, and a good many who enjoy them are not exactly an ornament to the foreign communities they have joined. Hence Egyptians do not feel flattered by having the same word employed to describe their new relationship to the British Empire. To anyone acquainted with the structure of our Indian Empire it could not but occur that the native States though distinctly under the protection of the British *raj*

are not termed Protectorates, and that their relations to the paramount Power are quite adequately governed by formal treaties of alliance, some of them more than a century old. No ruling prince is prouder of his connection with the British Empire than the great Mahomedan ruler of Hyderabad, but he addresses the King-Emperor as "my exalted ally." Might not the much looser ties contemplated between Egypt and the British Empire be made equally secure and far more acceptable to the Egyptian people by a Treaty of Alliance in lieu of a Protectorate or in definition of its purpose ?

How far the British Government still was from entertaining any idea of a compromise on such lines was made manifest as soon as Lord Allenby returned on November 10th from leave. He had been away for two months, and though nobody could grudge him his first holiday after the strenuous years of war in which he had played so brilliant a part, it was high time he returned. Political agitation had once more reached a degree of violence which the Egyptian Prime Minister no longer pretended even to control. In Lord Allenby's absence there was no one at the Residency to speak with authority, nor was there yet any sign of a more definite British policy to which anyone could have spoken. Fortunately, he was too much of a soldier to return to his post without having his marching orders in his pocket. The very day after the rather futile attempt to celebrate the first "anniversary of Egyptian independence" Lord Allenby tried to recall Egypt from the world of illusions by delivering to the Egyptian Government the declaration of British policy which he had at last extracted from His Majesty's Ministers, and he took care that it should reach the Egyptian people in the form in which he delivered it to their Government by communicating it at the same time to the Press.

The text deserves to be quoted in full as it was the first explicit announcement to the people of Egypt of Great Britain's intentions with regard to the future of their

country since the proclamation of the Protectorat already five years old :

"The policy of Great Britain in Egypt is to preserve aut nomy in that country under British Protection, and to develo the system of Self Government under an Egyptian Ruler.

"The object of Great Britain is to defend Egypt again all external danger and the interference of any Foreign Powe and at the same time, to establish a Constitutional System which—under British Guidance, as far as may be necessary- the Sultan, his Ministers, and the elected representatives the people may, in their several spheres and in an increasi degree, co-operate in the management of Egyptian affairs.

"His Majesty's Government has decided to send to Egy a Mission which has as its task to work out the details of Constitution to carry out this object and in consultation wi the Sultan, His Ministers and representative Egyptians, undertake the preliminary work which is required before t future form of Government can be settled.

"It is not the function of the Mission to impose a Constituti on Egypt. Its duty is to explore the ground ; to discuss, consultation with the Authorities on the spot, the refor that are necessary, and to propose, it is hoped, in comple agreement with the Sultan and his Ministers, a scheme Government which can consequently be put into force."

That Lord Allenby had instructions not to allo British policy as laid down in this document to be open flouted was shown a few days later when the Cairo Co mittee of Independence issued a counter-manifesto which, after giving its own distorted version of t declaration, it proceeded to reiterate the usual protes and the usual demands. Lord Allenby signified to t President and Vice-President of the Committee that th had better retire for a time to the less heated atmosphe of their country estates. The provocation had been op and deliberate and could hardly be allowed to pass al gether unnoticed. Whether the "internment" of few other more or less prominent Nationalist leade who were during the next few days invited in the sa way to withdraw into the country, was always equa deserved or wise may be doubted—especially in o particular case which Egyptian public opinion, rightly

wrongly, at once traced to the Sultan's personal influence. More general was the acceptance, even by the more sober Nationalists, of the revival of a certain measure of control over the Press so long as it was confined within the limits of the existing Press Law, under which two native newspapers were suspended whose outrageous misrepresentations of the Alexandria disturbances had been certainly calculated, if not intended, to encourage further breaches of the peace.

With the advent of the Milner Mission now clearly in sight, Mohamed Said felt obliged to act up to his threat that he would resign if it came out in spite of his warnings. He did so on November 15th. Few regretted his disappearance, and some of his colleagues remained on in the new Cabinet formed by Yusuf Wahab Pasha, who, mainly because a Copt, had sat in almost every Cabinet since the murder of the Copt Prime Minister, Butros Pasha Ghali, in 1910. Yusuf Wahab showed great courage in accepting the post. The choice of a Copt was unfortunate, though perhaps unavoidable in the circumstances, as in a Mahomedan country the appointment of a Christian as Prime Minister is always received with suspicion. But even the Party of Independence could not openly resent it on those grounds without estranging some of their new Coptic allies. They were content to denounce Yusuf Wahab as a traitor to the Egyptian cause, and the chorus of abuse was taken up by his Nationalist co-religionists, one of whom only a fortnight later made an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate him in broad daylight in a much-frequented thoroughfare of the European quarter of Cairo. The new Cabinet was not a very strong or representative one, but its members were men of good standing and character, and it had a respectable head. Its successful formation was in itself a disappointment to the Party of Independence, who had hoped that the Milner Mission would find no Egyptian Ministers in office to receive it when it arrived.

For a moment there seemed some prospect of a more

peaceful atmosphere. On the surface there was undeniably a very wide difference between the British declaration of policy and the demands of the extreme Nationalist Party. In substance, however, it might be held to have gone some way to meet them. For if no reference was made to their claim to an immediate recognition of the principle of Egyptian national independence, a self-governing Egypt, such as His Majesty's Government appeared to contemplate, would in due course attain in fact to such a measure of independence as it is possible for a small country to maintain without the material support of a Great Power interested in its conservation. In proportion as that measure of independence increased, Egyptians would presumably recognise that the word "Protectorate," robbed of the imaginary terrors which our silence as to its real significance had conjured up, meant above all the assured protection against foreign interference and aggression which many even of the extremists admitted to be at present indispensable for the safety of Egypt, together with the advice and co-operation in the progressive development of their country for which, they also declared, they would always look to Great Britain rather than to any other Power. Those, however, who were trying in Egypt to induce the Egyptians to place a favourable construction upon the declaration were not helped by the language of British Ministers at home. To make up presumably for five years of almost unbroken silence on Egyptian affairs, British Ministers now suddenly let themselves go. Mr. Balfour declared in the House of Commons with unaccustomed energy that "British supremacy exists in Egypt, British supremacy is going to be maintained, and let nobody either in Egypt or out of Egypt make any mistake upon that cardinal principle of His Majesty's Government," and then proceeded to administer a special rebuke to that particular section of the ruling classes in Egypt who are of Turkish origin, though it was just amongst them that at that time the few men of some

mark who favoured moderate counsels were to be found. Lord Curzon in the House of Lords delivered a long speech which was doubtless intended to be more conciliatory. But the good impression made by his attempt to explain or explain away the significance of the Protectorate and by his assurances that we meant this time to make a reality of Egyptian representative institutions was largely marred by the unfortunate comparison he drew at the end between the state of Egypt and "the opposite and encouraging picture presented by the Sudan." "It is bad enough," said one Egyptian to me, "that *himayat* (the Arabic word for Protectorate) should assimilate our status in the world to that of the 'protected' foreign subjects in our midst, of whom you English people especially have never been very proud. Are we now to be called naughty boys because we are not prepared like the good Sudanese boys, barely reclaimed from savagery, to kneel down and kiss Lord Curzon's rod?"

Nor was it any more helpful that, just when the Mission was arriving with the avowed object, amongst others, of securing a larger share for the Egyptians in the administration of the country, new appointments of Englishmen to administrative posts and the arrival of fresh batches of young Englishmen to pass into the Egyptian public services continued to be announced in the public Press. It was difficult to make Egyptians understand that the old machinery had to be kept going until the Mission had completed its labours. They preferred to believe that an attempt was being made to confront the Mission with accomplished facts.

CHAPTER XV

THE MILNER COMMISSION

At last, on December 7th, in spite of all threats and fulminations, the Milner Mission, or more correctly Commission, arrived quite quietly in Cairo. There had been no untoward incidents, and the Cairenes were quite aware, after what had happened on November 16th in Abdeen Square, that Lord Allenby had no mind to tolerate any more riotous demonstrations. The Government had taken some pains to make it a representative Commission, for Lord Milner had as his colleagues Sir John Maxwell, who had made many friends in Egypt and lost none even when he administered martial law as General Commanding the Forces during the first year of the war; Sir Rennell Rodd, lately Ambassador in Rome, who had served for some time under Lord Cromer during the first phase of the Occupation; General Sir Owen Thomas, an expert on agriculture in many parts of Africa, who sits in the House of Commons as a somewhat detached member of the Labour Party; Mr. J. A. Spender, who as editor of the *Westminster Gazette* has been the ablest exponent of orthodox Liberalism in the London Press; and Mr. C. J. B. Hurst, one of the legal advisers of the Foreign Office, who had done much solid spade-work at the Peace Conference. The Secretary of the Commission, Mr. T. Loyd, had been formerly in the Egyptian service, and had won golden opinions from Englishmen and Egyptians alike. The

Commission shared with the recently created Ministry of Communications the newest and latest of Cairo hotels, the Semiramis, and from their windows they could look across the Nile to the unchanging Pyramids and the Sphinx with the subtle smile, whose riddle they, like so many others before them, had come out to try to solve. Was it to baffle them too?

Could their task have been kept within the four corners of the declaration of policy which Lord Allenby had brought out from England, it might have been relatively easy. In the light of the terms of reference framed for them with unabated optimism by the Home Government, they may well have regarded the problem in front of them as not altogether unlike that which Mr. Montagu had gone out to India during the war to study with the Viceroy, viz., that of setting the feet of an Oriental people on the path of self-government, and it must have seemed to them of good omen that the elaborate report which the Secretary of State for India had brought home with him was just then bearing fruit in a new Government of India Act, unanimously passed by both Houses of Parliament, which bore emphatic testimony to the sincere determination of the British people to share the benefits of their own free institutions with all nations brought within the orbit of the British Empire.

In India, indeed, we were breaking fresh ground, whereas in Egypt the soil was already to some extent, though badly, prepared. Egypt already had in its Legislative Assembly and Provincial Councils representative bodies which, however restricted their powers, had always been composed of Egyptians alone. The whole framework of government and administration was already Egyptian and was bound to remain Egyptian, and there could be no question of dividing up the executive into separate British and native compartments.

From the point of view of introducing democratic institutions, the problem doubtless looked much less complex in such a small country as Egypt with a now

fairly prosperous native population which shows no lines of social cleavage that are not being constantly crossed, and whose interests are more universally bound up with one sole great industry, viz., agriculture, than any single province in India. On the other hand, it was rendered more difficult by the presence of large foreign communities who control directly or indirectly the greater part of the economic life of Egypt and by virtue of ancient treaties can in many respects restrict and hamper the operation of the laws of the country which they do not choose to accept so long as the Capitulations remain in force. Therefore in determining the limits within which, subject to a larger or lesser measure of British advice and guidance, responsible government, hitherto unknown in Egypt, can be safely introduced, the Commission knew that it would be necessary to reckon, not only with the aspirations and the capacity of the Egyptians themselves and with our own special interests in one of the great highways of our Empire, but also with the effect likely to be produced upon foreign Powers, whose consent must ultimately be obtained to some very substantial relaxation of the onerous treaty rights they can at present exercise.

Moreover, when we undertook to legislate for a definite transfer of power and responsibility to Indians, we knew exactly where we were, for there was no room for any doubt as to where power and responsibility had hitherto lain. They were clearly and definitely vested in the British paramount power, which alone exercised executive authority. It was therefore a straightforward question of devolution as well as of decentralisation. In Egypt, we have never professed to rule or even to govern, but merely to play the part of vigilant advisers, though our advice was frequently transformed into a command. Assuming that British control was to be maintained, the task in front of the Milner Commission was to put our own house in order, to unravel the tangled texture of confused powers and responsibilities into which the executive authority vested in the Egyptian Government alone and

the advisory functions of the British control had been fitfully woven during nearly four decades of British occupation, and to devise a system of advisory co-operation free from the reproach of arbitrary interference.

What the Commission cannot have been prepared for, since British Ministers had shown no signs of realising it and Lord Allenby himself had conveyed no hint of it in the rosy-coloured speech he had recently delivered at the Guildhall, was the situation in Egypt itself, or the reception that awaited it on arrival. During the eight months which had elapsed since the first announcement of Lord Milner's mission, we had fallen back into the old policy of drift, whilst the Egyptian Party of Independence had been working indefatigably, and, as the event proved, very successfully, to persuade the Egyptian people to have nothing whatever to do with the Commission and to oppose a solid wall of passive resistance, not only to the inquiry which it came out to conduct, but also to the very premises on which that inquiry was instituted, namely, the maintenance of the British Protectorate. Whether the resistance would have proved equally stubborn had one or two responsible Egyptians been invited to join the Commission when it was constituted, or had been co-opted on to it when it reached Cairo, is a question that the Egyptians themselves never seem to have raised.

In the presence of this organised opposition, the Commission had necessarily to modify its programme, but it never flinched from its task, which was more than ample for the short time allotted to it. As it had always contemplated, it stayed three months in Egypt. They were three very strenuous months and cannot have been very pleasant ones for its members. For on the surface the tactics of the Party of Independence were extremely successful. The boycott proclaimed by it against the Commission before it reached Egypt was rigidly enforced, not only against the Commission collectively in Cairo, but against individual members who attempted excur-

sions on their own account into the Provinces. There was a very thorough organisation for watching every member's movements, and especially those of any one of them who tried to visit the villages and get into touch with the *fellaheen* and see for himself the conditions in which they live. Emissaries from Cairo dogged his tracks and often, but not always, succeeded in frightening the wretched villagers out of their wits with threats of the awful things that would happen to them if they ventured into contact with the "unclean thing." Wherever a member of the Commission travelled or was expected to travel, the local Nationalist Committee was warned from headquarters in Cairo to be on the alert, and even at small railway stations on the line demonstrations consisting often of a mere handful of schoolboys headed by a few vociferous *effendis*, generally lawyers and schoolteachers, were in readiness to shout "God crush (or sometimes crash) Milner!" "Long live Egypt! Long die England!" and other such amenities. So keen were they not to allow a single member of the Commission to escape their attentions that on one or two occasions travellers who had no connection whatever with it found themselves unexpectedly treated to these patriotic displays as the victims of mistaken identity. At Assiut the local Bar threatened to leave the court if Mr. Hurst, the legal member of the Commission, who wanted to attend an ordinary sitting of the provincial tribunal, presumed to enter the court-house. They got for their pains in this instance an extremely dignified rebuke which in any other country than Egypt, and even in Egypt at any other time than this, would have made them feel very foolish. At Tanta the Nationalists discovered too late that the town had been already harbouring Mr. Spender for a couple of days, and that whilst they were gathering in their thousands at the railway station to give him a warm send-off, he had departed quietly by motor for Cairo. So they turned their attentions to the Governor, who had committed the heinous offence

of receiving him, and serious rioting ensued for several days, and was only quelled, after one Indian soldier had been killed and another badly wounded, by bringing up two battalions to occupy the town. Fortunately this was the only occasion on which the campaign against the Commission led to any grave disturbances. Lord Allenby and martial law saw to that, and the quiet serenity of temper with which the Commission pursued its labours, undisturbed by the clamour of a largely artificial agitation, must have helped not a little to baffle the worst mischief-makers' schemes. On several occasions when Lord Milner and his colleagues had to run the gauntlet of unfriendly demonstrations, the ready tact and good-humour with which they met the demonstrators promptly put them out of countenance. In Cairo itself no attempt was ever made to molest them, and their visit to Alexandria, the most important commercial centre in Egypt, brought them at least into fruitful contact with the great foreign communities, French, Italian, Greek, as well as English, that are, and must for a long time continue to be, the vital factors in its economic life.

The prolonged delay in the dispatch of the Commission had allowed abundant time for a campaign of gross misrepresentation, which had taught the Egyptians to believe that its main purpose was to induce them to subscribe to the maintenance of the Protectorate, and that any contact with it would be tantamount to a recognition of British "usurpation." The very conciliatory *communiqué* issued by the Commission three weeks after its arrival, giving the clearest assurances of its desire to hear "without prejudice" the opinions of all parties and classes, fell on wilfully deaf ears, and was merely construed into a reluctant acknowledgment of the efficacy of the boycott, which it was declared high treason for any to disregard.

Of all the extravagant protests which the presence of the Commission drew forth, only two public pronouncements deserve special notice. That one facet of Egyptian

Nationalism is deeply tinged with Mahomedan fanaticism there had always been reason to suspect, and for months past it had been very noticeable that almost all the turbulent demonstrations, usually ending in violence, originated in popular gatherings held inside the mosques, where the most fiery speeches could be made with impunity. But though El Azhar was known to be a hot-bed of anti-British agitation and the great majority of its students had been allowed to desert the university in order to perambulate the country and to preach the boycott in the rural districts, its authorities had never yet openly identified themselves with the Party of Independence. They at last found an excuse in an incident which the extremists seem to have carefully prepared. Students from El Azhar had been devoting their attention for some days to the native shopkeepers in the bazaars adjoining the university, and trying to force them to close their shops as a protest against the Commission. The shopkeepers, peace-loving folk with a keen eye to business, objected and applied for protection. A small party of British soldiers was accordingly sent to maintain order and drove off a truculent band of Azharites, who at first made a show of resistance and then fled down a small street to El Azhar, whence, as soon as they thought themselves safe within its sacred precincts, they threw stones at their pursuers. Neither the young British officer nor his men knew anything about El Azhar and they fell into the trap. They only knew that they were being stoned from a native building, and a few men rushed the passage leading to the courtyard of the mosque and followed their assailants up a side staircase. They were promptly withdrawn when the officer realised that it was a religious building. But the authorities of El Azhar were determined to see in this unlucky incident a deliberate violation of their sacred premises, and addressed an indignant protest to Lord Allenby, who hastened, it may be added, to return an extremely conciliatory reply, explaining the circumstances and only drawing

attention in a few dignified words to the provocation under which the soldiers had acted. The real purpose of the protest became apparent, when the native Press published at the same time a long and vehement epistle which had accompanied it from the highest dignitaries of El Azhar, setting forth the claims of the nation to "complete independence" and endorsing the whole ultra-Nationalist programme.

Though addressed to the High Commissioner, it was a manifesto which would reach in due course every village and every mosque in Egypt and far beyond the frontiers of Egypt. It was an open defiance of the authority exercised by the High Commissioner under the Protectorate, which he had been sent out to uphold, and on the face of it an equally open defiance of the authority of the Sultan who had accepted the Protectorate. For Sultan Fuad had succeeded to the same supreme control which the Khedives had always enjoyed and which the ex-Khedive Abbas in particular had tightened up over El Azhar. It would have been unthinkable in the days of Fuad's predecessors that the Grand Mufti and all the other Grand Ulemas and Ulemas of El Azhar should venture on so grave a step without having taken the orders of their titular head who was also the head of the State. It was stated in British official quarters that the Sultan sent for some of the signatories and rebuked them in private, but there were few Egyptians who believed that he had not been in some way either privy to their action or powerless to prevent it, when he did nothing publicly to mark his displeasure.

Of far less importance, but not without its own significance, was a manifesto with which most of the princes of the Sultan's own family followed suit. It was in the shape of a letter addressed to Lord Milner, but published simultaneously in all the Nationalist papers. Like the grave and reverend seigniors of El Azhar, these "descendants of the glorious Mehemet Ali"—who, but for British bayonets, would have been swept out of Egypt

bag and baggage with the Khedive Tewfik by Arabi "the Egyptian" in 1882—proclaimed their loyalty to the cause of the Egyptian nation, and affirmed their determination to co-operate in vindicating Egypt's right to "complete independence." Again, it would have been unthinkable in the days of any other Egyptian ruler that the princes would have thus flouted his authority. For if they only were loyal to Egypt who repudiated the British Protectorate, was it not tantamount to charging with treason to the nation's cause the head of their house who consented to accept and to retain the Sultanate under the Protectorate? Again the Egyptians, who knew what would have happened in such a case under any of their former rulers, drew their own conclusions from the Sultan's failure to call his kinsmen publicly to order. Saad Pasha Zaghlul of course telegraphed his gracious approval and congratulations both to El Azhar and to the princes.

When the Commission departed early in March, the Nationalists boasted that it had left Egypt utterly baffled, humiliated, and defeated by the resolute will of a united nation more than ever determined to achieve "complete independence." The boycott, they declared, had been maintained triumphantly all along the line, and patriotism had won a bloodless victory. But in no country are appearances less to be trusted than in Egypt, and the Commission had by no means failed. It kept its own counsel as to the conclusions it had drawn from all that it had heard and seen, but it had certainly heard and seen a great deal. The boycott itself must have helped it to draw certain conclusions with which the Party of Independence may not have reckoned. What other interpretation can it have placed upon the boycott than that the leaders themselves were afraid to face a frank discussion of their demands, or upon the systematic intimidation practised by them to enforce the boycott on all their followers than that they dared not expose their people to direct intercourse with the Commission

lest it should dispel the atmosphere of entirely artificial suspicion they had so laboriously created? If the Nationalists are justified in claiming that they speak for the nine or ten millions of inarticulate peasantry as well as for the small minority who form the politically-minded classes, why should they have done their utmost to prevent members of the Commission, who have been accustomed in their own country to move amongst the masses, from seeing with their own eyes and hearing with their own ears what is the life and what are the needs and wishes of the Egyptian masses? What other conclusion can the Commission have drawn than that there are ugly skeletons in the Egyptian political cupboard which the Nationalists are interested in concealing? One of the most urgent questions of the present day is that of the relations between rackrenting landlords and tenants, and of the wages of agricultural labourers, which, with the enormous rise in the price of foodstuffs, have ceased to be living wages. But the Nationalist propaganda depends largely for the sinews of war upon the contributions of the great landowners, who are also the great profiteers, whether they open their purses willingly or, perhaps more often, under a pressure that savours of blackmail. Now these are questions in which some members of the Commission were particularly interested. What conclusions can they have drawn from the elaborate precautions taken by the Nationalists to head them off the inquiries they wished to make for themselves? What opinion are they likely to have formed as to the real purpose of a movement which professes to be essentially democratic and makes a special appeal to the democratic element in England, when its leaders are afraid to allow the humble folk, of whom they pretend to be the spokesmen, to have word for themselves with a democratic member of the British Parliament? If the Nationalists wished to estrange the sympathies and excite the distrust of men who were most disposed to believe in their cause, they could not have done so more

effectively than by the boycott of the Milner Commiss
and the methods they adopted to enforce it. That
well prove to have been one of the most importan
negative, results of the Commission's journey to Eg

Not less edifying must have been the insight it ga
into the cross-currents of intrigue that fought ben
the smooth surface of agreement between the diffe
groups of Egyptian politicians. The Party of I
pendence claims to have swallowed up all other par
and for the time being there is certainly no other organ
party in Egypt. But there are not a few diffe
shades of complexion even amongst its professed adher
and it would be easy to name a good many men of
siderable weight and standing who have never yet
scribed to its full programme, though they hesitat
put forward a programme of their own. Such me
Rushdi and Adli and Sarwat, who held office when
Protectorate was proclaimed, and remained in offic
through the war, cannot take up quite the same atti
as the Paris Delegation towards the maintenance o
Protectorate, however much they may dislike its
tinuance and would prefer to substitute some
nexus with the British Empire. Even the leaders o
Party of Independence are not all at one in believing
an independent Egypt could dispense with su
and assistance from Great Britain. Zaghlul hi
has not gone as far as that, or denied that Great B
has specific interests in Egypt which Egyptians
take into account. Nor were all at one as to the att
to be adopted towards the Commission itself.
ventured openly to defy the boycott, but some welc
and even sought for opportunities of meeting its me
privately, and passed on the substance of their con
tions to their friends or sometimes to the native
Several ex-Ministers were satisfied that those con
tions offered a hopeful basis for an ultimate understa
even with Zaghlul, and important communications
through confidential channels between them an

leader of the Party of Independence in Paris. He was himself believed to be less intractable than were his public utterances, with their obstinate reiteration of the one sterile proposition that the recognition of "complete independence" must be a condition precedent to any sort of negotiation either with the British Government or with the Commission. Some of the deliberate mischief-makers at one moment betrayed their alarm by throwing out reminders in the Press that Zaghlul after all was originally a creation of Lord Cromer, and with such a congenital taint might well be in danger of backsliding unless a close watch was kept upon him by the "seagreen incorruptibles" of stalwart Nationalism.

Whilst the Commission desired nothing but frank and open speech with the Egyptians, the politicians all clung to the methods of secret diplomacy, except when they thought to serve their own purposes by calculated indiscretions. These were so frequent that it was easy to follow the mysterious goings and comings between different groups in Cairo, and between Cairo and Paris, and equally easy to detect the unfortunate part played by personal jealousies and ambitions and the deep-rooted distrust of each other that prevails amongst Egyptian politicians, in defeating the well-meant efforts of those amongst them who were most anxious to open up some avenue of fruitful discussion with the Commission. The peacemakers might have been more successful if they had had in a greater measure the courage of their convictions, but their failure was certainly not due to any unwillingness on the part of the Commission to welcome their co-operation and to agree to almost any suggestion made by them with a view to facilitate practical negotiations. The Commission evidently realised very soon that Zaghlul and his friends, however slender might be their hold on the Egyptian masses, were at least in full control of the political machine, and that until they were induced to take a hand in negotiations there could be little or no prospect of any issue by negotiation from a deadlock

which had already lasted far too long. The wreckers, on the other hand, were quite aware that, unless they could keep the wires cut between the Commission and the Nationalist headquarters in Paris, the moment would inevitably come when the dissensions, disguised for the time being under vague but comprehensive political formulæ, would break out in the open. It is easy enough to show a solid front on a platform of mere negation such as the refusal of the Nationalists to negotiate with, or even to talk to, the Commission. Had they talked or negotiated, they would have had to pass from mere negation to constructive propositions, and these it is that the out-and-out opponents of any understanding with Great Britain dread, because they are bound at once to produce differences of opinion and provoke dissenting criticism even from political friends and supporters, who in Egypt especially are always potential rivals.

Had the leaders of the Party of Independence laid themselves out to demonstrate how lacking they are in any statesmanlike sense of proportion and even in tactical skill, or how little they trust each other or the mass of their followers, they could not have done so more effectively than by their attitude towards the Milner Commission. There are better sides to Egyptian Nationalism than those which its political chiefs chose to exhibit, and the Commission will not have neglected to take note of them. But a nation's capacity for self-government has to be judged very largely by the capacity of the men by whom it elects to be represented, and that these did not serve Egypt wisely when they had a great opportunity is a conclusion for which they have only themselves to thank.

But if the Egyptians were too short-sighted or distrusted themselves too much to afford the Commission the opportunities of consultation which it had been instructed to seek, there was another part of its inquiry which the boycott could not affect. For the first time since the Occupation the methods and agencies of British

control and the relations between it and the Egyptian Government and Administration were subjected to close investigation at the hands of a responsible and independent body officially appointed for the purpose. Such an investigation was sorely needed, for the war had merely precipitated and clearly demonstrated the breakdown of a machine which had gradually outworn itself. The time at the disposal of the Commission was perhaps unduly short, but it sufficed to collect abundant materials for informing the judgment of British Ministers. It probed the records of the public departments. It listened to the views, not only of the British officials, but also of the British unofficial community, whose existence the officials had fallen into the habit of ignoring. It heard, directly or indirectly, the opinions of many Egyptians, both official and unofficial. As for documentary evidence, it probably accumulated, as most Commissions of a similar order do, far more than it could possibly digest. Above all, it was able to witness at close quarters how the country was governed and administered during its stay in Egypt, and the one lesson it must assuredly have learnt is that such conditions of governmental and administrative confusion could not possibly endure, because they were fast becoming unendurable for Englishmen and Egyptians alike.

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CHAPTER XVI

GOVERNMENT BY MARTIAL LAW

One of the awkward features of the deadlock into which we have drifted in Egypt is that, even for measures quite remote from the controversial sphere of politics, proclamations under martial law have to take the place of ordinary legislative sanction. For instance, a recent law concerning house rents, which was a belated and somewhat slipshod attempt to mitigate the hardships of an acute housing crisis, could only be made operative by a solemn proclamation under martial law, and if experience shows it to require amendment, the amendments will have to be enacted in the same way. It is rather like using a sledge-hammer to crack a nut. But it is the only procedure now available.

New laws can still be drafted in the usual way and they can be approved by the Council of Ministers, but they cannot be carried through the next constitutional stage, which requires them to be passed by the Legislative Assembly. For the Legislative Assembly held its first and only session in 1914, before the war, just after it had been elected under the new Organic Statute promulgated during Lord Kitchener's tenure of office in Cairo. Since then it has been repeatedly and at last indefinitely prorogued. It has never been dissolved, but it is a moot point whether its powers have not by this time expired, as the periodical elections by which it should be partially renewed every two years have not taken place. It is

anyhow, less than ever likely to be convoked again in existing circumstances after the very clear indication which its members chose to furnish of its present political orientation. From time to time many members had individually declared their adhesion to the Party of Independence, whose leader, Saad Pasha Zaghlul, was its one elected Vice-President. There had been some talk of collective action whilst the Milner Commission was in Egypt, but none took place until just after its departure. When they at last decided to make a demonstration they made it as dramatic as possible. To the number of about five-sixths of their total strength, they met at Zaghlul's house in Cairo, invested their proceedings as far as they could with the solemnity of a regular sitting of the Assembly, elected the senior amongst them to the chair, and passed unanimously a series of subversive resolutions which need not be enumerated, since one of them contained the quintessence of all the rest. It declared all laws and decrees promulgated since the prorogation of the Assembly before the war to be null and void—that period including, of course, the decrees that had announced the deposition of the ex-Khedive and the accession of the late Sultan Hussein and the proclamation of the British Protectorate. Another resolution affirmed the right of Egypt to complete independence and declared Zaghlul to be the only recognised mandatory of the nation, whilst a very lengthy one, divided into various subheads, affirmed the sovereignty of Egypt over the Sudan and the indissoluble union of the two countries, and protested with great emphasis against the execution of the Nile projects in the Sudan without the consent of the Egyptian people. The meeting was obviously unlawful, as under the Organic Statute which created the Legislative Assembly it can only be convoked by decree, and the resolutions were in any case *ultra vires*, as they related to matters which under the same Organic Statute it is specifically precluded from dealing with. But as an act of demonstrative defiance

it was boldly planned and well carried out. Martial law might have prevented the meeting being held at all, but Lord Allenby may well have thought it impolitic to presume unlawful action on the part of members of so responsible a body. When it had taken place, he immediately issued a proclamation under martial law forbidding its repetition under severe penalties, and the preventive censorship of the Press having been revived under martial law only a few days previously, all reference to the meeting in Zaghlul's house was strictly excluded from the newspapers.

Apart from constitutional difficulties from which proclamations under martial law afford at present the only practical means of escape, martial law is also the only reserve force that upholds the authority, in itself more nominal than real, of Egyptian Ministers and even of the head of the State. That whilst Sultan and Ministers acquiesced in the dispatch of the Milner Commission to Egypt and gave it an official welcome they were powerless to prevent the boycott to which it was subjected by order of the Party of Independence gives the measure of their actual authority in the country.

Sultan Fuad was a child when he accompanied his father, the Khedive Ismail, into exile in 1879, and he spent so much of his life abroad, mostly in Italy, that he has never learnt to speak Arabic properly. It is not altogether his fault that he is looked upon as a foreigner rather than an Egyptian, and that the Mahomedans distrust even his orthodoxy. Unfortunately, he lacks even the qualities which make for popularity in the East. He never shows himself to his people, and he spends his extravagant Civil List on the pomp and circumstance of the little Court he holds in his Palace of Abdeen, very rarely venturing outside its gates, and surrounded by a small ring of courtiers, many of whom are undesirable survivals from the ex-Khedive's entourage. The Egyptian public, to whom he is unknown, swallows greedily all the stories told against him, which one can only hope contain

more fiction than fact. It is scarcely surprising that pious Mahomedans should have deemed it little less than blasphemy when he seized the occasion of his last birthday to introduce into the solemn Friday service a new prayer for his personal glorification as a model of all the virtues and brought his own name directly into conjunction with that of Allah and of the Prophet. With their nerves already on edge as to the fate of the Ottoman Sultan and Khalif, the politically-minded were quick to suspect an insidious design on the prerogatives of the Khalifate, which we have solemnly pledged ourselves to safeguard. There were angry protests and violent scenes in several mosques, and so many copies of the egregious prayer had been printed and issued from the Palace to the principal mosques all over the country that the silence imposed by the censor could not check the widespread indignation aroused by this gratuitous challenge to Mahomedan feeling. Nor was the indignation directed only against Sultan Fuad. As we had placed him on the throne, it was not unnaturally, though quite wrongly, assumed that he would never have dared to take such risks except at our instigation or at least with our consent. Not for the first time we were made to realise what a blunder had been committed when we chose as a successor to the late Sultan Hussein, who was universally respected, one who, as an Egyptian put it aptly, if rather bluntly, is "universally *dis*respected" by his subjects. Unpleasant as it is to say it, I have found scarcely a single Egyptian, and very few Englishmen, to dispute the accuracy of that unkind description. At a time when we have enough to do to regain the confidence which we have lost amongst so many classes in Egypt, it is deplorable that we should have to expend so much of our moral authority on bolstering up a ruler who has none with his own people. That we should go out of our way to identify ourselves still more closely with him by committing ourselves to recognise his infant son as heir to the Sultanate can only be interpreted by the people of

Egypt as an arbitrary attempt to prejudge a great constitutional issue on which, if we honestly mean to give them any genuine measure of self-government, they are surely entitled to be consulted.

The members of Yusuf Wahba's Cabinet are men of good repute and of considerable experience in the conduct of public affairs. They certainly deserve no little credit for personal courage, as the lives of the Prime Minister and of three of his colleagues have already been attempted, though happily without success, in the course of their short tenure of office. They cannot, however, be said to govern. They scarcely profess to. They have no public support behind them. They have their friends and well-wishers, but none who will come out into the open and do battle for them. There are plenty of Egyptians who have a greater insight into the practical needs of their country than the majority of Zaghlul's followers. They are just as good Nationalists in the best sense of the term. They may even heartily dislike the Protectorate, but they realise the futility of mere sullen opposition and still more the grave menace to the foundations of social order in the more violent forms of resistance. In private they make no secret of their desire for a friendly settlement with Great Britain, and, whilst resenting some of the methods of British control, recognise the necessity of its maintenance in the interests of Egypt itself within definite limits, which it should not be difficult, they believe, to determine by common agreement. But they have never had the courage to emerge from the tents in which, often for personal reasons, they prefer to sulk. Once a few of them seemed on the point of combining to form a new and distinct political party. They even issued a programme and described themselves as "Independent Liberals." But they soon fell out amongst themselves or succumbed to various forms of pressure which are peculiarly effective in an Oriental community. The new party expired almost before it had drawn breath.

But if Egyptian Ministers may complain that even

those who are more or less of their own way of thinking give them no practical or public support, is it not largely their own fault? Their country is in the throes of a dangerous political agitation of which they cannot but foresee and dread the consequences. Yet they have never braced themselves up even to point out its perils to their fellow-countrymen. They have never raised a warning voice or sought to give a wiser lead to public opinion. They have never enunciated any programme of their own in opposition to the programme of the Party of Independence. They have never challenged the propaganda carried on all around them for the subversion not only of British authority but of every principle of authority for which they doubtless themselves stand. They have never reprobated even the campaign of violence and intimidation which is demoralising the schools and colleges that their own children attend. Denounced day in and day out by the extremists as traitors to Egyptian Nationalism, they bear themselves with dignity when they are from time to time bombed by frenzied students, but they are roused to no effort of their own to wrestle with the whole spirit of criminal lawlessness that lies behind these crimes and is doing far graver mischief to the nation than to them. For more significant than the crimes themselves are the indifference with which the Egyptian public has learnt to treat them and the absence of any emphatic sign of disapproval from the leaders of the Party of Independence, whose humble followers the would-be murderers profess to be.

Egyptian Ministers might doubtless reply that it has never been the custom for them to appear on public platforms or to address themselves direct to their people, and that ever since 1914 martial law has closed the doors of the Legislative Assembly, where it would have been their business to meet hostile criticism and define their own position. But it is not by masterly inactivity that Saad Pasha Zaghlul and his friends have acquired their hold upon the country. The Party of Independence has

a formulated policy and definite aims, and it is not afraid to state them. Its policy may be merely destructive and many of its methods very discreditable, but one has to recognise its capacity for organisation and its untiring energy. Its leaders do not spare themselves. They not only fill the Press with fiery articles and pour out their eloquence at public meetings. They travel about the country, setting up local committees and sub-committees, canvassing every interest that can be enlisted in support of their cause, even spreading their nets abroad wherever they can hope to capture foreign sympathies. They never allow people to forget for a single day that they are making history.

Ministers meanwhile sit in their offices in Cairo and let them make history in so far as martial law does not interfere with the making of it by disorderly or flagrantly unlawful demonstrations. It has been hard enough indeed to find any Egyptians willing to take office since Rushdi and his Cabinet, who had kept an Egyptian Government in being throughout the long five years of war, resigned, when, even after the Armistice, the British Government refused to allow him to come to London to discuss what the Protectorate was to stand for, after peace was restored. Mohamed Said's only political utterance whilst he was Prime Minister was to protest against the dispatch of the Milner Commission. For the rest, he publicly washed his hands of politics. His successor, Yusuf Wahba, has never expressed any views at all on the great political issues with which the future of Egypt is bound up. He and his colleagues, like their immediate predecessors, carry on as best they can in the circumstances the administrative work of their departments. But when Ministers have ceased to exercise any authority as a Government, they can hardly be expected to supply the driving power required to keep the provincial administration going in a country in which even the highest officials have not yet learned to rely upon themselves. Governors and sub-governors do not know where to look for guidance, and

so long as the present political turmoil continues, most of them deem it wise either merely to mark time or else to swim with the current of extreme Nationalism, even if they are not at heart only too willing to do so. The Bar, which is a great political institution in the provinces as well as in Cairo, is ultra-Nationalist almost to a man, and the countryside swarms with students from El Azhar, who are given almost unlimited leave to carry on in the rural districts an anti-British propaganda, upon which the authorities deem it prudent to turn a blind eye. The Party of Independence even sends round quite openly its emissaries to collect subscriptions for its funds, and officials themselves help to circulate the lists.

The British Residency and the British officials have been scarcely less hampered by the uncertainty of the future. They could not know what would be the outcome of the Milner Commission, which has been hanging over them since May, 1919, and though Lord Allenby at last brought out with him in November a declaration of policy which has been from time to time accentuated by forcible speeches from British Ministers, the mere fact of the Milner Commission's presence in Cairo was naturally taken to indicate that that declaration had yet to be finally interpreted, and that its interpretation might substantially modify the meaning originally attached to it. On the other hand, Englishmen continued to be brought out to join the Egyptian public services, and appointments, sometimes rather questionable, were made just as if the whole question of the employment of Englishmen were not to come under review by the Commission. If the only element of real stability was provided by martial law, its application was sometimes strangely perplexing. Arrests and internments took place from time to time for reasons which the Egyptian public found it as hard to understand as the subsequent orders of release. Whilst special tribunals had dealt summarily with the minor fry caught red-handed in the rebellion, the real wirepullers had been allowed to escape scot-free, and even Under-Secretaries of State who

had played a prominent part in the prolonged strike of Government officials retained their appointments. On the other hand, many Egyptians who had remained loyal, and even some who had helped to save the lives of Englishmen during the worst troubles, received no reward or recognition. The handling of the Press was equally difficult to understand. Lord Allenby had abolished the censorship over the Press shortly after the suppression of the active and passive rebellions of March–April, 1919. Many Egyptians themselves questioned at the time the wisdom of conceding such very wide freedom to a largely irresponsible Press. Freedom indeed very soon degenerated once more into intolerable licence, and when the autumn brought back a recurrence of riotous demonstrations, some of the most rabid newspapers were occasionally suspended under the provisions of the ordinary Press law for inciting to violence, and then almost immediately allowed, rather unaccountably, to reappear. Whilst the Milner Commission was in Egypt, the Nationalist papers fulminated against it with complete impunity. To have attempted to muzzle it then would have been regarded as a vindictive retort to the boycotting of the Milner Commission. But no sooner had the Commission departed than martial law re-enacted the preventive censorship imposed during the war. It is perhaps the only really effective form of censorship, and it was applied with more intelligence than during the war, but so violent a swing of the official pendulum seemed to require more explanation than was given.

Lord Allenby, however, it must be remembered, was sent to Cairo as Special High Commissioner to restore public order and security after a formidable outbreak of violence, and he has remained in Cairo as High Commissioner to maintain them and to uphold the Protectorate. He carried out his instructions in the spirit of the fine soldier that he is, whose business is to obey orders and see that his own orders are obeyed. Few will contend that he could have dispensed with martial law, and still fewer

will deny that the use he has made of it, as an instrument of repression, has been free from all excessive harshness. But he himself would probably be the first to admit that, however indispensable so long as the Party of Independence held the field with its war-cry of "Down with the Protectorate," it is a singularly clumsy instrument for dealing with the practical problems of government, which are none the less pressing because they have nothing to do with the political controversies of the hour.

One of these problems arose suddenly and in a very acute form in the first months of 1920 out of an appalling rise in the price of foodstuffs, and especially of those foodstuffs upon which the poorer classes in Egypt live almost exclusively. It was partly due to the general rise in prices all the world over, and partly to the diminishing production of cereals in Egypt itself, where the promise of extravagant profits has induced many of the large landowners to put an excessive proportion of their land under cotton instead of cereals. The rise in the price of foodstuffs had caused some anxiety during the later years of the war, for amongst the urban working classes and the landless labourers in the rural districts it had been by no means covered by a general and sometimes not inconsiderable rise in wages. Already in 1917 Dr. Wilson, of the Kasr-el-Aini Hospital in Cairo, a recognised authority on the conditions of life and nourishment amongst the poorer classes, estimated at two millions the number of men, women, and children who were seriously underfed. Nor did the end of the war bring the expected relief, and prices continued to go up after the Armistice. But it was hoped that its effects had been to a great extent countered by a further readjustment of wages. The Egyptian Government itself recognised the necessity of granting an increase of 60 per cent. to all its officials, which would, however, have been more effective had it been so graduated as to afford greater proportionate relief to the small employees who stood most in need of assistance. Anyhow, towards the end of 1919 the worst

was supposed to be over, and the official tariffs, which had been from time to time imposed, without much success, to keep prices down, were again removed. But all calculations were disastrously upset when within three months there was another and quite unprecedented rise. The following figures speak for themselves. Between December 1, 1919, and March 1, 1920, the price per *ardeb* of maize, which is the favourite foodstuff of the people, rose from 213 piastres to Pt.450 (97½ piastres = £1) per *ardeb*; wheat from Pt.336 to Pt.535; barley from Pt.218 to Pt.450; beans from Pt.350 to Pt.650, and lentils from Pt.356 to Pt.745. *Tibn*, or chopped straw, the chief fodder for animals, which had been purchased a year ago at the tariff price of Pt.70 per quarter-ton load, rose from Pt.155 to Pt.215. In many parts of the country prices soared locally to even greater heights, and the landless poor, who derived no benefit from the rise since they had no produce to sell, could not possibly buy sufficient food for themselves and their families out of their inadequately increased earnings, and in many cases the food was not there to be bought even if they had the money. Yet landlords were all the time clearing more land for cotton, and occasionally even pulling up for the purpose young crops of cereals in their haste to reap a golden harvest on the Alexandria cotton market. In 1915 the Government had restricted by law the area under cotton, but removed the restriction in 1916, when it at once jumped from 1,186,004 feddans (or acres) in the preceding year to 1,635,512 feddans, and increased again slightly in 1917. In 1918 it was again restricted and brought down to 1,315,572 feddans. But the restriction was then once more taken off, and the area under cotton for 1919 expanded to 1,573,662 feddans. All through the last five years the area under foodstuffs of all kinds, except lentils, has been almost uninterruptedly shrinking, and in most cases the shrinkage has been very considerable; for wheat, for instance, from 1,533,801 feddans in 1915 to 990,945 last year.

Thus, whilst Egypt as a whole had grown extraordinarily prosperous, and huge fortunes had been made and the *fellaheen* taken in the aggregate had waxed fat, there was widespread and acute misery amongst numerous classes, and with misery went the growth of discontent, especially when there were political agitators only too keen to fan the embers of discontent into flame. Even if there was no deliberate attempt to increase the food shortage by inducing native traders to hold up their supplies or only to offer them for sale at preposterous prices, the Extremists went about the country whispering that the shortage was due to the enormous requirements of the British Army, and the expansion of the cotton area to the selfish demands of Lancashire. Both from the political and from the economic point of view, not to speak of mere humanity, there was a dangerous situation which called for prompt and generous action. But Ministers who can barely carry on, and officials, British and Egyptian, handicapped by the increasing uncertainty of the political situation as well as by an outworn system of hopelessly divided powers and responsibilities, do not readily appreciate the necessity for prompt and bold decisions and are not easily accessible to outside pressure. Some effective measures were at last taken, and with the assistance of the British Government considerable imports were rushed into Egypt, with the promise of more to follow, and stores were opened for the sale of flour to the public under cost price. More forethought and more energy might have brought much earlier relief, but in such matters they are hardly to be looked for in Egypt under existing conditions of government. The one bright spot was the capacity for self-help which some of the Egyptians themselves displayed. An organisation started by a young nationalist lawyer of Damietta, Ameen Effendi Yusuf, indeed showed a better way to the authorities. The co-operative association which he initiated in his own native town, one of the poorest in Egypt, where 24,000 out of a total population of 32,000 were in sore need of assistance, and which he subsequently

extended to Mansourah and other towns, not only in t
Delta, but in Upper Egypt, laid itself out at once
discriminate between those who clearly deserve relief a
those who do not, whereas the Government scheme l
many loopholes for the well-to-do and especially for t
big traders to reap the benefit of the sale of foodstu
under cost price. Lord Allenby very wisely did n
allow himself to be deterred from giving official suppo
to this promising movement by the prejudice which
Nationalist origin seemed at first to raise against it.

To the inveterate habit of procrastination and secre
which are not altogether of recent growth in Ang
Egyptian administration, may be still more direct
traced the sudden exacerbation of Egyptian feeling ov
the projects for the storage of the Nile waters in t
Sudan, which coincided with the resignation of the Minist
of Public Works, Ismail Sirri Pasha. His resignatio
it was authoritatively stated, had nothing to do with th
question, but was due solely to reasons of health.
too had been bombed, and though he escaped any actu
injury, he had suffered severely from the shock.
resignation nevertheless came at a singularly awkwa
moment. The bitter controversy that had raged for mo
than a year over the Nile projects had not been arrest
by the appointment, long overdue, of a fresh Committ
of Inquiry, consisting of three independent experts, t
of them Anglo-Indian engineers and one an America
The British Government had still failed to measure t
distrust provoked in Egypt by the mystery in which t
projects had been enveloped from the start and t
persistent refusal to take the Egyptian public into th
confidence with regard to schemes involving not mer
a large expenditure of Egyptian money but the p
manent and vital interests of Egypt, whose very
depends upon an abundant supply of water from the Bl
and the White Nile that flow down together from t
Sudan. No Egyptian was put on to the Committee, a
this was a fresh and not unreasonable grievance. T

Extremists took the matter up as soon as they saw the opportunity it offered for shaking still further the confidence which the *fellaheen* had formerly placed in British control, for whatever the *fellah's* lack of political understanding, anything that may affect or menace the supply of water for the irrigation of his land touches him on the raw. The merits or demerits of the Nile projects are bound up with technical issues which no layman can be competent to discuss, but the very grave charges brought against the British Adviser to the Ministry of Public Works by so distinguished an expert as Sir William Willcocks, and reinforced by the testimony of Colonel Kennedy, an able engineer formerly in the service of the Sudan Government, provided the Nationalists with all the materials for a sensational campaign. They conducted it with their usual violence, and one immediate result was that when the Residency obtained permission from London to try to repair at least one blunder by inviting an Egyptian to join the new Committee of Inquiry, none could be found to accept the invitation. Even the vacancy at the Ministry of Public Works could only be filled by prevailing upon Mohamed Shafik Pasha to take over that Department in addition to his own Department of Agriculture, which, at a time of severe food shortage, made an already excessive call upon his undoubted capacity for administration. Ismail Sirri, it is true, gave his parting blessing to the Nile projects, but though he is one of the few Egyptians qualified to speak with authority as a highly trained and experienced engineer, his statement fell flat, because as a Minister he shared the discredit into which a Government is bound to fall that systematically abdicates one of its most important functions, namely, the guiding of public opinion. An official assurance, rather haltingly worded, that all construction works connected with the Nile projects which involved the expenditure of Egyptian money would be suspended until the new Committee of Inquiry had reported was received with the same scepticism.

Under martial law, the censor can forbid all discussion in the Press, but the stress laid upon this thorny question in the resolutions passed at the conclave of members of the Legislative Assembly shows that, whilst had it been handled with wisdom and frankness from the beginning it might have always remained an economic question, it has now passed into the dangerous domain of politics.

There are other and larger economic and financial problems which it was difficult to deal with under the restraints imposed on our veiled Protectorate. They ought to be far less difficult under our proclaimed Protectorate, and their solution is becoming more urgent. But they are forgotten in the sterile turmoil of political agitation. Egypt is proverbially the land of paradox, and if it is startling to find an agricultural country *par excellence* exposed to acute distress from a shortage of essential food supplies, it is an almost more surprising paradox that, even when it has been enriched beyond the dreams of avarice by a war which has impoverished the greater part of the world, its legitimate demands for increased expenditure by the State on purposes of uncontroverted utility cannot be satisfied because under an antiquated treaty system a large part of its enormously increased wealth lies beyond reach of taxation. The political troubles in Egypt may be rightly regarded up to a certain point as part of the great cosmic disturbance caused by the war, but there is one fundamental difference to be borne in mind. Most countries in which the fever of political discontent is raging are reeling under the appalling financial burdens of a struggle which has shaken to its very foundations the whole fabric of economic if not of national life. Egypt, on the contrary, has never known such prosperity as the war has brought her. Our war expenditure is believed to have poured altogether at least £E.200,000,000 (the Egyptian pound equals £1 0*s.* 6*d.*) into the country. Its one great source of national wealth, the productivity of its soil, was never impaired, but, on the contrary, appreciated enormously

in value. Egypt is being, perhaps unwisely, converted into a mainly cotton-growing country. But the immediate results are amazing. Egyptian cotton, which before 1916 very rarely sold for more than £E.4 a *kantar* then considered a record price, topped £E.20 a *kantar* in 1919 and was even driven up at one moment by wild speculation to the giddy height of £E.40 a *kantar*, from which it has only fallen back to £E.30–34. The value of last year's cotton crop cannot be estimated at less than £E.100,000,000, which would more than pay off the whole Egyptian debt. Indeed, the Egyptian debt, formerly held almost entirely abroad, is passing now steadily into Egyptian hands, as so many of the *nouveaux riches* do not know what else to do with their plethora of money. To the big foreign banks, whose business has largely consisted in making advances on agricultural land, the rate at which these are being reimbursed to them is almost embarrassing. The trade balance in favour of Egypt for 1919 amounted to £E.33,000,000. A recent Note by the Financial Adviser sets forth Egypt's foreign investments between 1915 and 1919 as amounting to £E.152,000,000, and of the £E.65,000,000 of paper money issued since 1914, it states the great bulk to have been hoarded.

Remote indeed are the lean years of the eighties, when every Budget was a race against bankruptcy won by the shortest of heads. The last of Lord Cromer's Budgets, that of 1906, after taxation had been considerably lightened, already showed a revenue of £E.15,377,000, with a surplus of £E.2,175,000 over expenditure. The Budget for 1919–20 was calculated to balance at £E.28,850,000 a figure which must, however, be considerably discounted in view of the large inflation due to war prices. The Budget Estimates for 1920–21 have leapt up to £E.40,000,000—an increase again almost wholly due to inflation. Nevertheless, these figures testify to the almost uninterrupted expansion of Egyptian revenue which has been going on since the early years of the

Occupation without any material change in the character of taxation. But there lies the rub. Mere expansion of revenue, so long as there is no material change in the character of taxation, cannot meet the growing need of the country for better education, better sanitation, better housing, better policing, better communications, etc. Many of the public services, unavoidably stinted in the lean years, remained, less unavoidably, stinted in the fatter years that followed. Egyptian criticism of the parsimony in such matters, enforced or tolerated by British control, and in some cases due to sheer lack of interest and intelligence, has not always been unwarranted and some of the causes of the present discontent can be traced back to it. To-day the State would have ample resources to meet a far more liberal increase of expenditure if it were free to take toll of the nation's prosperity for national needs. But, as I have already pointed out, the large sources of revenue (with the one exception of the land tax) which direct taxation affords in other countries are closed against the Egyptian Treasury by the Capitulations, which, by securing immunity from increased taxation for foreigners without the consent of the Capitulation Powers, in effect secure the same immunity for Egyptian subjects, as no Egyptian Government could be expected to differentiate against its own subjects by subjecting them to taxation from which foreigners remained free. The same restrictions hamper the development of local government. Foreigners in most of the large townships have been wise enough not to stand on the letter of their rights and have agreed to contribute their share of voluntary taxation for municipal purposes. But to build on any large scale on voluntary taxation is as risky as building on a quicksand.

These restraints on the fiscal independence of Egypt constitute a real Egyptian grievance, all the more real in that in no country in the world probably are larger fortunes made by foreigners, who contribute by way of taxation little or nothing in return beyond the payment

of import duties. Take such cases as the following. There is a huge establishment of universal providers in Cairo run by Syrians which is stated to have made £350,000 profit last year on a capital of £600,000. Not a penny does it contribute to the State, except import duties, which it passes on to its customers. Or take a Greek subject who comes to Egypt as a penniless lad and becomes in time a millionaire. Sometimes, like a good Greek patriot, he leaves the whole of his fortune made in Egypt to his native town in Greece. Neither during his life nor at his death does the Egyptian State get a drachma out of his income or his estate, though it is Egypt that has made him rich. Not only are such conditions fatal to sound finance, but they are politically dangerous. For the sense of injustice they engender feeds the anti-foreign feeling, from which few Egyptians are altogether free.

The Capitulations stand equally in the way of labour legislation, the need for which has been brought home to employers as well as to the men by the recent epidemic of strikes, though they may have been as often due to political agitation as to economic causes. The Party of Independence now professes to make light of the Capitulations because their abolition or revision is not likely to be granted by the Powers in the event of a British withdrawal from Egypt. Before political passion ran so high the Nationalists themselves made it one of their chief reproaches against England that she did nothing to rid Egypt of such intolerable servitudes. But Great Britain is now pledged to move in the matter, and she cannot do so effectively until political stability is sufficiently ensured in Egypt to induce foreign Powers to listen to reasonable proposals.

There are other big questions which may not be affected by the particular form which the connection between Egypt and the British Empire ultimately assumes, so long as it is a connection that restores mutual confidence and good will. These are questions with which the welfare

of the *fellaheen* masses is as closely bound up as those on which Lord Cromer wisely concentrated the efforts of British control during the early years of the Occupation. The *fellaheen* population as a whole has benefited greatly by the enormous rise in the value of agricultural land and of the products of the land which constitute the chief wealth of the country. But there are rocks ahead. The big landlords are usually absentee landlords, and of these the number and the wealth have increased suddenly and dangerously. For though a very large proportion of the *fellaheen* themselves own some land, it is often only a few feddans, and like those who own no land of their own, they try to rent as much as they can possibly afford from their more fortunate neighbours, and these have taken advantage of recent conditions to impose extortionate rents. There are many landowners who lease out part of their land to-day for a larger annual rent per feddan than the feddan cost them to buy twenty years ago. Land hunger is as strong a passion amongst the Egyptian as amongst any peasantry in the world, and the peculiar climatic conditions of the valley of the Nile limit the cultivable area to the area of possible irrigation, which cannot be indefinitely extended. The State still owns a relatively small remnant of the old Khedivial lands handed over to it in the course of the great financial liquidation in the days of Ismail, and, instead of putting them up for auction, which usually means handing them over to the already plethoric landlords, facilities might be given to the small landowners and landless *fellaheen* to purchase at reasonable rates. But that is only a very partial remedy. Legislation will almost certainly be needed to protect the small man against the greed of the big rackrenters and to place land rentals on some reasonable basis of fixity. The land tax itself no longer bears any appreciable relation to the enormous appreciation in the value of land since the last assessment. The renting value of agricultural land in Egypt was then estimated at £17,000,000. It may now be estimated at close on

£100,000,000. The land tax was then settled to yield £5,000,000 per annum for a term of thirty years which does not run out for another decade. It is impossible to alter the assessment, but it has been suggested that, without proceeding to any reassessment, a steeply graduated super-tax might be imposed on owners of more than five feddans, and that no landlord should be allowed to lease out his land for cultivation at a rental higher than three times the land tax and super-tax he would then be paying. It is a difficult question, but it will have to be taken in hand, or Egypt may be threatened with a serious agrarian movement.

If the appalling prevalence and steady increase of crimes of violence in the rural districts did not point to the necessity of reforming the whole system of village governance and police, it could scarcely be indefinitely shelved after the lurid light thrown upon it by the abuses which were committed during the war in connection with the levying of supplies and the recruitment of the Labour Corps in the villages. The *fellah* was delivered by Lord Cromer from the exactions of the tax-gatherer and the hardships of the *corvée*. He has yet to be delivered from the petty tyranny of the village Omdeh.

It was by large measures of reform unmistakably conceived in the interests of the Egyptian masses and directly brought within the range of their experience and intelligence that we won and retained for many years the confidence and good will of the great majority of the people of Egypt. We had the courage to take great risks in those days when the poverty of the Egyptian exchequer might have excused some pusillanimity. Though our hands were much more free, the later years of the veiled Protectorate were only once touched with the same spirit, when Lord Kitchener came to the rescue of *fellaheen* indebtedness with his "Five Feddan Law."

The spirit of that first period when British control really meant the discharge of a great trusteeship is just as much needed to solve the problems of the present day.

It is needed in the first place to put an end to a political deadlock which paralyses all fruitful effort. Not till we have left behind us the No Man's Land of government by martial law can we hope to regain the confidence of a new generation of Egyptians by applying to the altered conditions which any measure of self-government must imply the same broad constructive statesmanship which won for us the confidence of an older generation.

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEED FOR AN HONOURABLE SOLUTION

We occupied Egypt thirty-eight years ago in order to rescue it from anarchy and ruin, and we remained, as we then declared and have again repeatedly declared since then, as trustees for its people who had never governed themselves and whom we could not leave to be misgoverned as in the past by their own rulers. We promised and honestly believed that our trusteeship would be merely temporary, and that when we had discharged it we would withdraw. But to discharge it we had to assume ever-increasing responsibilities for the government and administration of the country which made withdrawal more and more difficult. During the earlier period of the Occupation, it was only with the latent hostility of foreign Powers, whose opportunities of obstruction were manifold and frequent, that we had seriously to reckon. We could set against it a general acceptance of British control by the Egyptians from the head of the State downwards, and by none with such an instinctive appreciation of its value as by the masses, who could see and feel for themselves that to them at least it had brought release from ancient oppression and an undreamt-of measure of prosperity. By the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, France, who had opposed us longer and with more determination than any other Power, signified at last her acquiescence in our presence in Egypt. Turkey

alone still sought occasionally to remind us that the Ottoman Sultan had not renounced either his suzerain rights or his underground methods of giving trouble in Egypt.

Our veiled Protectorate did not even then receive any formal international sanction, but our hands were much more free, and we admitted frankly that we could set no definite term to the Occupation. Perhaps on that account we grew to be more careless of our trust when the great Proconsul left Egypt who had consistently preached and practised an exceptionally high standard of duty. A change too of policy took place, which, however well meant, resulted, to our own discredit, in strengthening the evil influence of the Khedive rather than in enlarging the liberties or quickening the political education of the people. During this later period Lord Kitchener's "Five Feddan Law" showed an almost solitary revival of the generous spirit of the earlier days, and whilst an Anglo-Egyptian bureaucracy, more centralised and more mechanical as it grew rapidly in numbers, was losing contact with the masses, the political restlessness of the new middle classes, largely due to Western education, and the Pan-Islamic reaction against the West prompted from Constantinople found common ground in the renascence of a fervid Nationalism directed against tutelage by an alien Power.

Nevertheless, until the Great War threw Egypt with the rest of the world into the melting-pot, we were able to assume, without fear of contradiction, the consent of the vast majority of the population to a Protectorate which, though still, if rather thinly, veiled, had acquired most of the elements of permanence. During the war we deemed it necessary to transform the veiled Protectorate into an openly proclaimed one, and in the Treaty of Versailles we secured for it an international sanction which the veiled Protectorate had always formally lacked. With a strange irony, it was just then that the Egyptians, who had remained quiet throughout the war and indeed

helped us materially to win it, broke out for the first time since the Occupation into tumultuous and widespread risings against us. The disturbances were quickly repressed, and martial law has since then prevented any serious renewal of disorders. But it has by no means restored peace. We are still confronted by an organised political movement against the proclaimed Protectorate to which leaders of undeniable popularity in the country, with Saad Pasha Zaghlul at their head, have succeeded in giving at least the appearance of a national protest.

The Sultan and his Ministers carry no weight in the country, and least of all amongst the politically-minded classes, that can be set against the whirlwind activities of the Party of Independence. This party, which claims to be "the nation," has adopted the formula of "complete independence" as its watchword, and it insists that we are bound by our own professions to apply the principle of self-determination to Egypt and to withdraw forthwith and altogether from Egypt when the Egyptian people, speaking through its mouth, formally demand our withdrawal.

Without conceding the claim of the Party of Independence to be or to represent "the nation," one must admit that we can hardly go on assuming as we have hitherto done the consent of the people of Egypt to the maintenance of the Protectorate, or indeed of British control in any form. We must face a situation which has never before existed since 1882. After trying vague declarations of policy that satisfied no one, and using strong language that frightened no one, the British Government sent out at the eleventh hour a Commission of Inquiry under Lord Milner. It stayed three months in Egypt and it did its work, though it was stubbornly boycotted by the Party of Independence, who never budged from their position that they could no more negotiate with the Commission than with the British Government so long as the complete independence of Egypt was not unconditionally recognised.

Can we possibly yield to this demand unless we are pared to reply in the affirmative to the following questions: Is the Party of Independence really quali to speak, as it professes to do, on behalf of the Egyp people? Has Egypt any case for claiming comp independence as of right, and is she in a position to m tain it if it is conceded? Does her past history any n than her present condition of social, economic, or polit development warrant the belief that complete indep dence is likely to conduce to the progressive evolutio the Egyptian people themselves on the lines of moc civilisation, or to the restoration of permanent p between the nations and more especially in the so disturbed regions of the Middle East? I have failed attain the one object of this volume if I have not furnis the reader with sufficient data for him to frame his answer to those questions.

But there are nevertheless, it must be admitted, cer currents of opinion amongst Englishmen, both in Eg and at home, in favour of withdrawal from Egypt whate may be the answer to those questions. This conclusio reached from two opposite directions. Some take Party of Independence at its own valuation as t representing a nascent Egyptian democracy, capable governing itself, and refuse to admit any doubts as to applicability to Egypt of the principle of self-determ tion which is with them an article of faith. Oth frequently soldiers, contend that, the war having e mously strengthened the whole position of the Bri Empire in relation to other Powers, its interests can be adequately safeguarded without maintaining direct control over Egypt proper, and that we had th fore better leave the Egyptians to stew in their juice and rid ourselves as quickly as possible of a polit entanglement which makes, or may make, an exces call on our military and financial resources. Th however, would not subscribe to unconditional w drawal. The conditions which they usually profess

regard as essential are the retention of the Suez Canal territory and of the Sudan, together with an acknowledged right of re-entry should an independent Egypt relapse into a state of disorder so gravely affecting the interests of other Powers as to render foreign intervention again inevitable. Our retention of the Suez Canal territory, which covers the most vulnerable of Egypt's land frontiers, would be such a boon to an independent Egypt that they cannot imagine any serious difficulty arising over it. The Party of Independence, it is true, claims not only the recognition of Egypt's complete independence, but also, and very vociferously, the complete surrender to it of the Sudan. But that claim is naturally dismissed as quite untenable. The Egyptians could not possibly have reconquered the Sudan for themselves, nor hold it to-day if we did surrender it to them. So little indeed is the Sudan regarded to-day, even by foreign Powers, as part of Egypt, that since its reconquest it has remained outside the domain of the Capitulations. More tenable would be the claim that, if we left Egypt and retained the Sudan, we should make good the expenditure which Egypt has incurred in connection with its reconquest and its subsequent administration under Anglo-Egyptian rule, and also bind ourselves to supply Egypt in future with the legitimate share of the waters of the White and the Blue Nile essential to her existence. So reasonable a proposal as our right of re-entry in the event of grave internal troubles could not, it is urged, be rejected, as the Egyptians would merely make a damaging admission that they doubted their own capacity to govern themselves and prevent the case for re-entry ever arising. Moreover, the Egyptians need have the less anxiety on that score, as the old burden of financial obligations abroad which first led to foreign interference, and indirectly to the British Occupation, no longer weighs upon them, and they could easily raise to-morrow an internal loan to repay the whole of the Egyptian debt still outstanding.

Assuming that the Party of Independence would agree to such conditions as not too excessive a price for ridding Egypt of the "usurpers," withdrawal represents a policy more easy perhaps to defend from the point of view of selfish British Imperialism than from that of advanced Liberals to whom Imperialism is anathema. For though the mere material difficulties in carrying it into effect would be enormous, it has the attraction of following, for the moment, the line of least resistance. But to state it should be enough to show that we cannot adopt it without a dangerously hasty, if not dishonourable, repudiation of all the responsibilities we have assumed during the last thirty-eight years. Self-determination may be an admirable principle, but only unreasoning faith can urge that it is of universal application or that it should be applied to peoples as incapable of expressing themselves as the Egyptian masses still are. The leaders of the Party of Independence have themselves shown by boycotting the Milner Commission that they were afraid to let it be put to the test of any close inquiry into the wishes or even into the conditions of life of their people. Many of the methods of agitation and of intimidation practised by the Party of Independence and its at least tacit condonation of violence have grown painfully reminiscent of the methods of the "Young Turk" Committee of Union and Progress, which was equally lavish in 1908 of democratic assurances of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," with the results that we know. Should we really promote the evolution of the Egyptian people towards nationhood by handing them over to a party which is appealing more and more openly to the reactionary forces of the Islamic world? What would be the effect in Palestine and Syria and throughout the Middle East? Or should we serve the cause of universal peace if, after having for the first time now secured international sanction for British control, we were suddenly to renounce it altogether, without any regard for the welfare of the foreign communities established in Egypt who look to us for the protection of their

interests—interests with which, moreover, the whole economic life of Egypt is bound up ?

Another policy would be simply to take our stand on our paramount position already recognised by the Treaty of Versailles, and presumably about to be confirmed by our Peace Treaty with Turkey, and impose the unconditional acceptance of British supremacy upon a country which owes to our arms alone its release from Turkish suzerainty, and has no title to claim as of right an independence which it did not possess before the war and has, in fact, for twenty-five centuries never possessed. But such a policy, if it stopped there, would be the very assertion of force from which, as Lord Curzon has stated, the British Government recoiled when in 1914 it preferred the proclamation of a Protectorate to the annexation pure and simple of Egypt to the British Empire. As a policy of force it would be incompatible with the sentiments that govern the British democracy, or with the ideals which the British Commonwealth of Nations has set before itself. We could not justify it before the world, and though a large army of occupation would doubtless keep Egypt in subjection, it would be only too probably a Sinn Fein Egypt, and the Sinn Fein spirit with all the latent forces of Mahomedan fanaticism behind it might well prove even more dangerous in the East than in the West.

There should have been no need to allude to such a policy, since it has already been implicitly and explicitly repudiated in every declaration made by the British Government, had not the Egyptians been led, partly by our own blunders and procrastination and partly by a long-drawn campaign of deliberate misrepresentation, to distrust all official assurances. The policy to which the British Government have pledged themselves is the same policy, applied to Egyptian conditions and to the closer relationship with the British Empire into which Egypt has been brought by the war, that is now universally recognised to be the only one that can knit the Empire

together, namely, partnership between its members for common defence and freedom to each to develop constitutionally on its own individual lines. The policy of association, not domination, has prevailed continuously in the relations between Britain and the great Dominions built up mainly by men of our own British stock. It prevailed in the South African settlement when it was applied for the first time to bring together two peoples who, though both of European stock, had been driven into collision by the conflict of different national temperaments and traditions. It is being applied now for the first time to the relations between Britain and the greatest of her Oriental dependencies, whose people are infinitely more remote from our own by race, religion, and civilisation. That Britain means to apply it to Egypt should be clear enough even from the terms of the Declaration which Lord Allenby brought out from London last autumn. That Declaration contained the essential promise of autonomy and self-government—a promise we are bound to keep, even though it did not satisfy the demands of the Party of Independence, and it came too late to dispel the atmosphere of wild suspicion and resentment which many unfortunate happenings before, during, and after the war had created, by no means amongst the politically-minded classes alone.

Until it has been followed up by definite and tangible proposals for giving effect to it, such as will, one may hope, be contained in the recommendations of the Milner Commission, we have nothing substantial to set against the raging and tearing propaganda of the Party of Independence, and the Egyptians will continue to treat our assurances that all shall come in good time with just as much impatience as we treat the assertions of the Nationalists that nothing will satisfy Egypt but "complete independence." What makes Englishmen who sympathise with many Egyptian grievances despair of the Nationalist leaders is that not one of them has hitherto been found to explain what constructive policy they

intend to pursue if and when they have got "complete independence." What makes Egyptians despair, who realise their need of England's friendship and help, is that we seem to be equally unable or unwilling to explain by what process we propose to reconcile British supremacy with Egyptian self-government, and that such indications of policy as can be gathered from government by martial law point not towards but away from the fulfilment of our promises. For it is in the loss of Egyptian confidence, largely due to our own mistakes, that must be sought the main cause of our troubles, and the chief explanation of the large amount of popular support that the Party of Independence has won for its impracticable programme. There have been other contributory causes in the revival of racial and religious antagonism as well as in the ferment of new ideas, equally intolerant of any alien tutelage, but they have aggravated, not produced, the present revolt against British control.

If we want to regain the confidence we have lost, it is essential that we should understand why we have lost it in order to know how to regain it. When one talks to sober-minded Egyptians, one finds that, apart from a certain deterioration in the quality of British control, which it should be relatively easy to remedy as it has been largely due to personal factors, the system has had two evil results which have above all others provoked disappointment and distrust. One is the increasing effacement of Egyptian Ministers—so complete to-day that in these critical times they never open their mouths in public or attempt to give their people a lead—and the other is the inadequate and generally quite subordinate share given to Egyptians in the administration of the country. Both are naturally regarded as incompatible with any progress towards Egyptian self-government. I have already pointed out how the effacement of Egyptian Ministers has resulted from the failure to define the powers and responsibilities of those who represent on the one hand the authority of the British controlling power, and

on the other that of the native Government. In the occult dualism of a veiled Protectorate that blurring of powers and responsibilities was perhaps inevitable, but it led to constant friction and misunderstandings, it opened the door to all manner of intrigues, and, as was seen in the time of the ex-Khedive Abbas, to a revival of arbitrary power equally harmful to the authority of British control and to that of Egyptian Ministers. I have laid stress also on our failure to give Egyptians the increasing share in the administration to which we had repeatedly pledged ourselves, and without which they cannot learn, or be equipped, to play their part in a self-governing Egypt.

We may adorn any scheme of reforms with the most copious assurances of our anxiety to help Egypt forward to self-government, and we may even set before them as an ultimate goal national independence under the ægis of the British Empire. The Egyptians will have no faith in the honesty of such professions unless the scheme provides a substantial guarantee for the redress of those two outstanding grievances. It must clearly define the limits of the control to be exercised by Great Britain as well as the purpose for which it is to be exercised. Her control, instead of being indefinitely stretched, should be confined to those departments on which, until the final goal is reached, she must retain a hold for the better discharge of her responsibility for the external and internal security of Egypt. Such would be foreign relations, the army, public security, communications, and perhaps irrigation, and so long at least as there is an Egyptian foreign debt, finance. Outside the limits of British control there would thus be left a wide sphere in which the Egyptians would have plenty of elbow room for a practical beginning of self-government. That sphere might for instance at once include, or be periodically expanded so as to include, besides local government, education, agriculture, public works, sanitation, and other departments in which, subject to common agreement on

principles of policy, Egyptians may well show themselves the best judges of the methods suitable to their own people. This does not mean that they should dispense with British expert advice and assistance which the great majority recognise they are not yet qualified to forgo. It is important to discriminate between British control, exercised by those who represent British authority, and the advisory and administrative and even in certain departments executive functions of Englishmen employed in the Egyptian public services.

If dualism cannot at present be eliminated, it can at least be frankly defined and delimitated. To that end the powers to be vested in the High Commissioner must be as distinctly specified as the limits of the control he would have to exercise. All other powers, with the responsibilities they carry, would then remain equally clearly vested in the Egyptian Ministers. This involves a complete separation of the agencies of British control from the Egyptian Executive, such British advisers as it would be necessary to retain being appointed by the British Government and made directly responsible to the High Commissioner, who would direct and control their relations with the Egyptian Ministers. Advisers and their inspectorial and personal staff should be British officials instead of being camouflaged as they are now as Egyptian officials. For one thing, we should no longer be tempted to appoint, as has sometimes happened, advisers who, having no special qualifications and being obliged to learn their jobs after appointment, could carry very little weight with Egyptian Ministers.

Whether Egyptian affairs remain under the Foreign Office, which is, however, singularly ill-equipped to deal with them, or are transferred to the Colonial Office or to a new department in charge of the whole Middle East, the Secretary of State, to whom the High Commissioner would be responsible, ought not to be left without the assistance of a small council with Egyptian experience, and composed partly of Egyptians.

The whole question of the employment of Englishmen in the Egyptian public services should be submitted to an Anglo-Egyptian Commission representing the High Commissioner and the Egyptian Prime Minister. In the departments still reserved for British control the High Commissioner should have the final voice in determining the nature and the number of the posts required for Englishmen, in all others the Prime Minister. Englishmen should least of all be appointed to subordinate posts. A permanent Committee could then be established to superintend new appointments and promotions. The question would thus no longer be that of creating a post for such and such an Englishman, sometimes with little regard for his qualifications, or of making room for a number of young Englishmen annually recruited from home, but of appointing the best Englishman available to a post which no Egyptian was admittedly qualified yet to fill. Englishmen thus appointed would form part of the Egyptian service under the orders of Egyptian Ministers, and on terms laid down by them, whether in short time contracts or for long periods, with the one proviso for their protection that before the expiry of their engagements they could be removed only on reasons shown and with the consent of the High Commissioner. The Egyptians would know that they were getting as large a share of administrative work as they were qualified to get, and that it depended upon themselves to enlarge that share by qualifying in increasing numbers. There might, and probably would, be at first a considerable loss of efficiency, but the friction arising out of constant interference by British officials, without any clearly defined right to interfere, would disappear or be reduced to a minimum. Many of the Englishmen now in Egypt would doubtless be requested to remain, and compensation would of course have to be given to those who did not remain.

The Egyptians certainly have yet to prove their capacity for self-government. But we are pledged to

give them an opportunity to practise it, and it must be a sufficiently wide one to put them on their mettle and develop their sense of political responsibility. We may believe that it will lead—at first at least—to very much worse government and to the revival of many old-time abuses. But that is no reason for breaking the promise to which we are committed. Nor does there seem to be any reason why the Egyptians should not decide for themselves what form of representative institutions is best suited to their social and political development, and how far Egyptian Ministers should be made responsible to them in the whole domain of government and administration left outside the limited range of British control—a domain which we should moreover undertake to enlarge as rapidly as possible in the light of experience and results. As a natural corollary, the functions of the head of the State should be confined to those of a strictly constitutional ruler.

One of the most delicate matters of adjustment would be the relations between the High Commissioner and the Egyptian Legislature, and a new department would probably have to be created at the Residency for keeping not only the Legislature but also Egyptian public opinion fully acquainted—as has never yet been done—with the objects of British policy in general and with the reasons for the particular exercise of the discretion reserved to the controlling power whenever special circumstances arose to call for it. The initial difficulty—and no slight one—will be to define the limits of the legislative powers of an Egyptian Assembly. They must, on the one hand, correspond with the stages through which the evolution of Egyptian self-government will pass, but they must, on the other hand, be so circumscribed as to avoid conflicts between them and the powers vested in the Mixed Tribunals, which neither we nor any other foreign Power can be reasonably asked to renounce until modern conceptions of justice have taken much deeper root in the country. A premature attempt to get rid of the

Mixed Tribunals—an institution which dates considera
further back than the Occupation—would merely def
any proposals for the drastic revision of the Capitulatio
which it would be the first duty of Great Britain to pr
forward in discharge of her new responsibilities. It
at any rate of good omen that Mr. Hurst's project
merging the jurisdiction of the Consular Courts into t
of the Mixed Tribunals—the one result of its labo
which the Milner Commission made public before leav
Egypt—has been received very favourably.

The form to be given to such a settlement, and
name that the new relationship between Britain a
Egypt should bear, may seem much less important th
the substance. But we ought not to make light
Egyptian sentiment, which is now almost universa
embittered against the word Protectorate and its
fortunate Arabic version *himayat*, however elastic
practice may be the interpretation we are ready to pl
on it. Is it worth while for us to insist upon a word t
in itself has even less meaning than the formula
complete independence upon which the Egyptians ins
to our thinking, so unreasonably? As to the form
settlement, it might be embodied in a new Orga
Statute which would receive the approval of the Brit
Government, or, as the Egyptians themselves wo
probably prefer, in a formal Treaty of Alliance, wit
preamble placing on record as the object of Brit
policy an ever-enlarging measure of self-government
Egypt with, as its final goal, her national independe
in perpetual amity and association with the Brit
Empire. Either form would probably be more accepta
to the Egyptians than the substitution for the P
tectorate of a mandate from the League of Natio
which they might construe into an attempt to releg
them to the position of inferiority which such manda
appear generally to connote. On the other hand, t
would doubtless welcome as a spontaneous pledge
good faith our willingness to communicate to the Lea

of Nations, on the precedent of the Anglo-Persian Treaty, whatever instrument ultimately embodies the [illegible] mutually entered into between the British and Egyptian Governments.

Such a policy, had it been adopted as soon as the war was over, would almost certainly [illegible] by the majority even of the politicians [illegible] in Egypt. Much, however, has happened [illegible] and Egyptians have become hypnotised by the cry for "complete independence." But the [illegible] they may no longer believe in us as they [illegible] not yet been carried away by it. A large [illegible] those who have a stake in the country [illegible] experience in the conduct of public affairs [illegible] it. Others have succumbed to it merely [illegible] have never met it by any explicit [illegible] legitimate grievances and meet reason [illegible] It is not too late yet to rally them, not by [illegible] ances, but by telling them what our policy really is and means, and how we intend to carry it out. Even [illegible] those who first raised the cry of "complete independence" and who still seek to impose it as an article of patriotic faith, there are probably not a few who would [illegible] the cost of barren resistance as soon as they realised that we had spoken our last word, if only that word is reasonably generous and conveys a fulfilment of promises to which we are already pledged up to the hilt, and if it has the old ring of sincerity which in the earlier days of our veiled Protectorate converted Zaghlul himself and other quondam followers of Arabi "the Egyptian" to belief in British honesty of purpose. We are in no way bound to yield to the vehement clamour of the Egyptians for "complete independence," for we are free, and have the right, to judge that issue on its merits and to reject it as too dangerous a leap in the dark for them as well as for us and for the peace of the whole Eastern world. We are not free, and we have not the right, to refuse them a large and progressive measure of self-government.

for this is a course to which we are committed not only by our traditions, but by all our professions before and during and since the war. There are dangers in this course too, but none so great as in a breach of our plighted faith. When, but not until, we have redeemed our own promises, can we hold the Egyptians responsible, if they reject all overtures for a settlement by mutual consent and persist in their endeavour to defeat an honourable solution of the Egyptian problem which should satisfy their sense of separate nationhood and give them at the same time such an assurance of security as, in this period of world-travail, they can hardly hope to find elsewhere than in close association with the great commonwealth of nations that we call the British Empire.

Just as these last pages are going to press it is officially announced that Saad Pasha Zaghlul has arrived in London with several members of the Egyptian Delegation and other political friends, in response to an invitation from the Milner Commission, and that negotiations have begun with a view to finding a basis of friendly agreement. The mere fact that such negotiations are taking place is a welcome proof that British Ministers as well as the leaders of the Egyptian Party of Independence have definitely abandoned the unbending attitude which has kept them too long, and unwisely, apart. Though much patience and good will may still be required to overcome, not only the difficulties inherent to the problem, but also the reactionary influences which, in Cairo as well as in London, will not want to see them overcome, one may reasonably hope that a settlement by consent is now actually in sight.

THE END.

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